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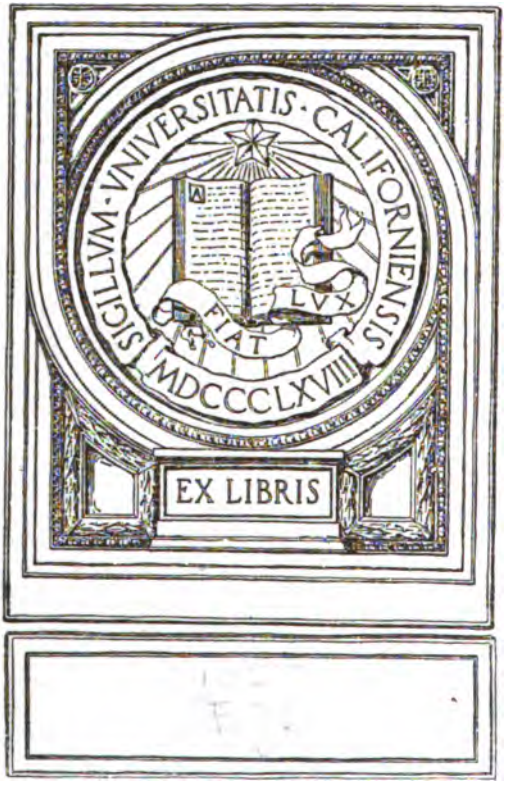
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In the Heart of the Vosges

M. Betham-Edwards

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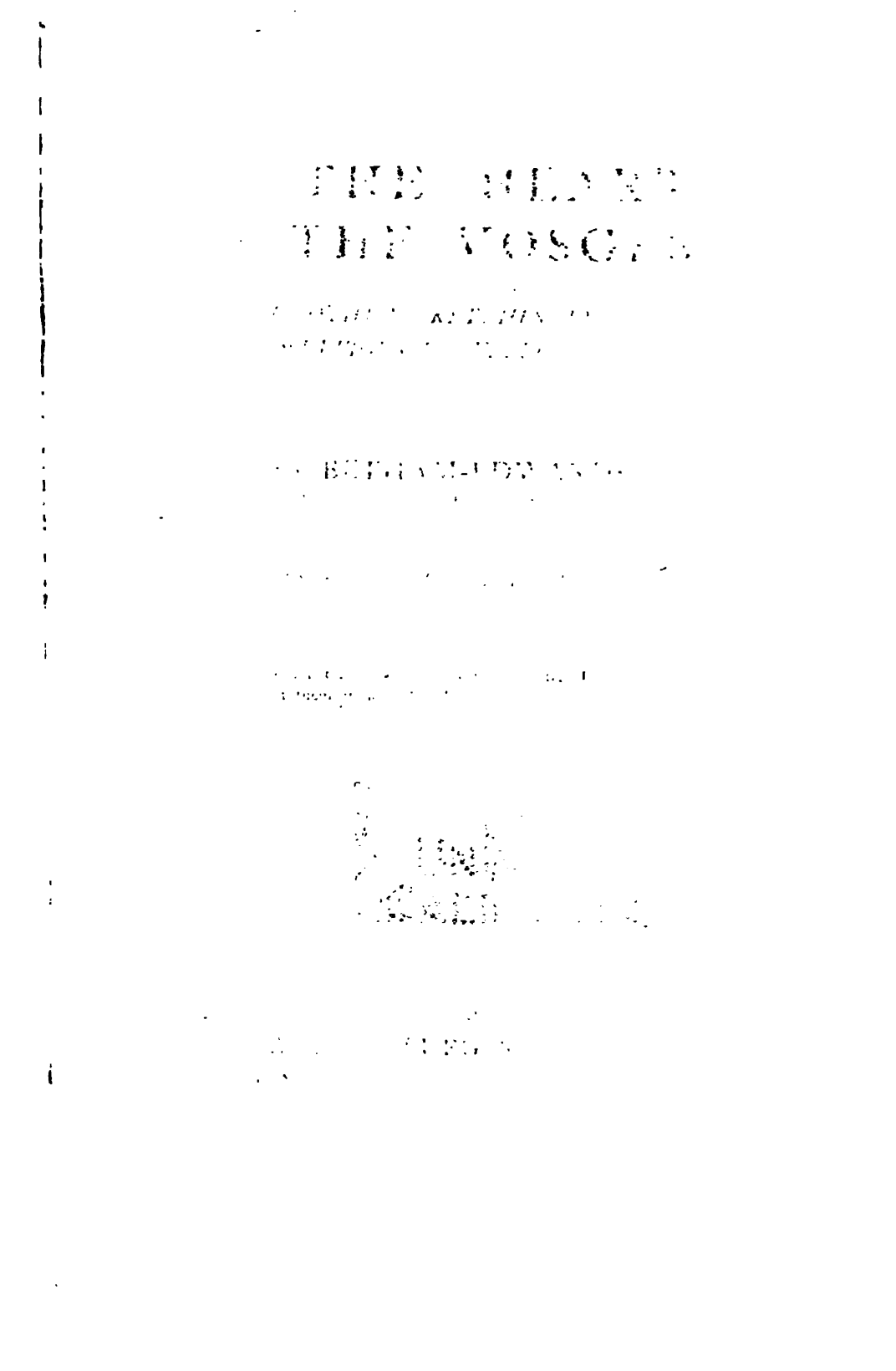
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[*Frontispiece*

ST. ODILE

Drawn by Georges Conrad



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IN THE HEART OF THE VOSGES

AND OTHER SKETCHES BY A "DEVIOUS TRAVELLER"

BY

MISS BETHAM-EDWARDS

OFFICIER DE L'INSTRUCTION PUBLIQUE DE FRANCE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY SPECIAL PERMISSION

"I travel not to look for Gascons in Sicily. I have left them at home."—*Montaigne.*



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PREFATORY NOTE

SOME of these sketches now appear for the first time, others have been published serially, whilst certain portions, curtailed or enlarged respectively, are reprinted from a former work long since out of print. Yet again I might entitle this volume, "Scenes from Unfrequented France," many spots being here described by an English traveller for the first time.

My warmest thanks are due to M. Maurice Barrès for permission to reproduce two illustrations by M. Georges Conrad from his famous romance, *Au Service de l'Allemagne;* also to M. André Hallays for the use of two views from his *À Travers l'Alsace;* and to the publishers of both authors, MM. Fayard and Perrin, for their serviceableness in the matter.

Nor must I omit to acknowledge my indebtedness to Messrs. Sampson Low & Co., to whom I owe the reproduction of Gustave Doré's infantine *tours de force;* and to Messrs. Rivington, who

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have allowed large reprints from the work published by them over twenty years ago.

And last but not least, I thank the Rev. Albert Cadier, the son of my old friend, the much respected pastor of Osse, for the loan of his charming photographs.

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I

GÉRARDMER AND ENVIRONS



PROVINS. GENERAL VIEW

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GÉRARDMER AND ENVIRONS

THE traveller bound to eastern France has a choice of many routes, none perhaps offering more attractions than the great Strasburg line by way of Meaux, Châlons-sur-Marne, Nancy, and Épinal. But the journey must be made leisurely. The country between Paris and Meaux is deservedly dear to French artists, and although Champagne is a flat region, beautiful only by virtue of fertility and highly developed agriculture, it is rich in old churches and fine architectural remains. By the Troyes-Belfort route, Provins may be visited. This is, perhaps, the most perfect specimen of the mediæval walled-in town in France. To my thinking, neither Carcassonne, Semur nor Guérande surpass Hégésippe Moreau's little birthplace in beauty and picturesqueness. The acropolis of Brie also possesses a long and poetic history, being the seat of an art-loving prince, and the haunt of troubadours. A word to the epicure as well as the archæologist. The bit of railway from Châlons-sur-Marne to Nancy affords a series of gastronomic delectations. At Épernay travellers

are just allowed time to drink a glass of champagne at the buffet, half a franc only being charged. At Bar-le-Duc little neatly-packed jars of the raspberry jam for which the town is famous are brought to the doors of the railway carriage. Further on at Commercy, you are enticed to regale upon unrivalled cakes called "Madeleines de Commercy," and not a town, I believe, of this favoured district is without its speciality in the shape of delicate cates or drinks.

Châlons-sur-Marne, moreover, possesses one of the very best hotels in provincial France—the hotel with the queer name—another inducement for us to idle on the way. The town itself is in no way remarkable, but it abounds in magnificent old churches of various epochs—some falling into decay, others restored, one and all deserving attention. St. Jean is especially noteworthy, its beautiful interior showing much exquisite tracery and almost a fanciful arrangement of transepts. It is very rich in good modern glass. But the gem of gems is not to be found in Châlons itself; more interesting and beautiful than its massive cathedral and church of Notre Dame, than St. Jean even, is the exquisite church of Notre Dame de l'Épine, situated in a poor hamlet a few miles beyond the octroi gates. We have here, indeed, a veritable cathedral in a



PROVINS, THE CAPITOL

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wilderness, nothing to be imagined more graceful than the airy open colonnades of its two spires, light as a handful of wheat ears loosely bound together. The colour of the grey stone gives solemnity to the rest of the exterior, which is massive and astonishingly rich in the grotesque element. We carefully studied the gargoyles round the roof, and, in spite of defacements, made out most of them—here a grinning demon with a struggling human being in its clutch—there an odd beast, part human, part pig, clothed in a kind of jacket, playing a harp—dozens of comic, hideous, heterogeneous figures in various attitudes and travesties.

Notre Dame de l'Épine—originally commemorative of a famous shrine—has been restored, and purists in architecture will pass it by as an achievement of Gothic art in the period of its decline, but it is extremely beautiful nevertheless. On the way from Châlons-sur-Marne to Nancy we catch glimpses of other noble churches that stand out from the flat landscape as imposingly as Ely Cathedral. These are Notre Dame of Vitry le François and St. Étienne of Toul, formerly a cathedral, both places to be stopped at by leisurely tourists.

The fair, the *triste* city of Nancy! There is an indescribable charm in the sad yet stately

capital of ancient Lorraine. No life in its quiet streets, no movement in its handsome squares, nevertheless Nancy is one of the wealthiest, most elegant cities in France! Hither flocked rich Alsatian families after the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, and perhaps its proximity to the lost provinces in part accounts for the subdued, dreamy aspect of the place as a whole. A strikingly beautiful city it is, with its splendid monuments of the house of Lorraine, and handsome modern streets bearing evidence of much prosperity in these days. In half-an-hour you may get an unforgettable glimpse of the Place Stanislas, with its bronze gates, fountains, and statue, worthy of a great capital; of the beautiful figure of Duke Antonio of Lorraine, on horseback, under an archway of flamboyant Gothic; of the Ducal Palace and its airy colonnade; lastly, of the picturesque old city gate, the Porte de la Craffe, one of the most striking monuments of the kind in France.

All these things may be glanced at in an hour, but in order to enjoy Nancy thoroughly a day or two should be devoted to it, and here, as at Châlons-sur-Marne, creature comforts are to be had in the hotels. In the Ducal Palace are shown the rich tapestries found in the tent of Charles le Téméraire after his defeat before Nancy, and



PROVINS, THE CITY WALLS

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other relics of that Haroun-al-Raschid of his epoch, who bivouacked off gold and silver plate, and wore on the battlefield diamonds worth half a million. In a little church outside the town, commemorative of this victory, are collected the cenotaphs of the Dukes of Lorraine—the *chapelle ronde*, as the splendid little mausoleum is designated—with its imposing monuments in black marble, and richly-decorated octagonal dome, making up a solemn and beautiful whole. Graceful and beautiful also are the monuments in the church itself, and those of another church, Des Cordeliers, close to the Ducal Palace.

Nancy is especially rich in monumental sculpture, but it is in the cathedral that we are to be fairly enchanted by the marble statues of the four doctors of the church—St. Augustine, St. Grégoire, St. Léon, and St. Jerome. These are the work of Nicolas Drouin, a native of Nancy, and formerly ornamented a tomb in the church of the Cordeliers just mentioned. The physiognomy, expression, and pose of St. Augustine are well worthy of a sculptor's closest study, but it is rather as a whole than in detail that this exquisite statue delights the ordinary observer. All four sculptures are noble works of art; the fine, dignified figure of St. Augustine somehow takes strongest hold of the imagination. We

would fain return to it again and again, as indeed we would fain return to all else we have seen in the fascinating city of Nancy. From Nancy by way of Épinal we may easily reach the heart of the Vosges.

How sweet and pastoral are these cool resting-places in the heart of the Vosges! Gérardmer and many another as yet unfrequented by the tourist world, and unsophisticated in spite of railways and bathing seasons. The Vosges has long been a favourite playground of our French neighbours, although ignored by the devotees of Cook and Gaze, and within late years, not a rustic spot possessed of a mineral spring but has become metamorphosed into a second Plombières. Gérardmer—"*Sans Gérardmer et un peu Nancy, que serait la Lorraine?*" says the proverb—is resorted to, however, rather for its rusticity and beauty than for any curative properties of its sparkling waters. Also in some degree for the sake of urban distraction. The French mind when bent on holiday-making is social in the extreme, and the day spent amid the forest nooks and murmuring streams of Gérardmer winds up with music and dancing. One of the chief attractions of the big hotel in which we are so wholesomely housed is evidently the enormous salon



GÉRARDMER

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given up after dinner to the waltz, country dance, and quadrille. Our hostess with much ease and tact looks in, paying her respects to one visitor after another, and all is enjoyment and mirth till eleven o'clock, when the large family party, for so our French fellowship may be called, breaks up. These socialities, giving as they do the amiable aspect of French character, will not perhaps constitute an extra charm of Gérardmer in the eyes of the more morose English tourist. After many hours spent in the open air most of us prefer the quiet of our own rooms. The country, too, is so fresh and delicious that we want nothing in the shape of social distraction. Drawing-room amenities seem a waste of time under such circumstances. Nevertheless the glimpses of French life thus obtained are pleasant, and make us realize the fact that we are off the beaten track, living among French folks, for the time separated from insular ways and modes of thought. Our fellowship is a very varied and animated one. We number among the guests a member of the French ministry—a writer on the staff of *Figaro*—a grandson of one of the most devoted and unfortunate generals of the first Napoleon, known as "the bravest of the brave," with his elegant wife—the head of one of the largest commercial houses in eastern France

—deputies, diplomats, artists, with many family parties belonging to the middle and upper ranks of society, a very strong Alsatian element predominating. Needless to add that people make themselves agreeable to each other without any introduction. For the time being at least distinctions are set aside, and fraternity is the order of the day.

I do not aver that my country-people have never heard of Gérardmer, but certainly those who stray hither are few and far between. Fortunately for the lover of nature no English writer has as yet popularized the Vosges. An Eden-like freshness pervades its valleys and forests, made ever musical with cascades, a pastoral simplicity characterizes its inhabitants. Surely in no corner of beautiful France can any one worn out in body or in brain find more refreshment and tranquil pleasure!

It is only of late years that the fair broad valley of Gérardmer and its lovely little lake have been made accessible by railway. Indeed, the popularity of the Vosges and its watering-places dates from the late Franco-German war. Rich French valetudinarians, and tourists generally, have given up Wiesbaden and Ems from patriotic motives, and now spend their holidays and their money on French soil. Thus enterprise

has been stimulated in various quarters, and we find really good accommodation in out-of-the-way spots not mentioned in guide-books of a few years' date. Gérardmer is now reached by rail in two hours from Épinal, on the great Strasburg line, but those who prefer a drive across country may approach it from Plombières, Remiremont, Colmar and Münster, and other attractive routes. Once arrived at Gérardmer, the traveller will certainly not care to hurry away. No site in the Vosges is better suited for excursionizing in all directions, and the place itself is full of quiet charm. There is wonderful sweetness and solace in these undulating hill-sides, clothed with brightest green, their little tossing rivers and sunny glades all framed by solemn hills—I should rather say mountains—pitchy black with the solemn pine. You may search far and wide for a picture so engaging as Gérardmer when the sun shines, its gold-green slopes sprinkled with white châlets, its red-roofed village clustered about a rustic church tower, and at its feet the loveliest little lake in the world, from which rise gently the fir-clad heights.

And no monotony! You climb the inviting hills and woods day by day, week after week, ever to find fresh enchantment. Not a bend of road or winding mountain-path but discloses a

new scene—here a fairy glen, with graceful birch or alder breaking the expanse of dimpled green; there a spinny of larch or of Scotch fir cresting a verdant monticule; now we come upon a little Arcadian home nestled on the hill-side, the spinning-wheel hushed whilst the housewife turns her hay or cuts her patch of rye or wheat growing just outside her door. Now we follow the musical little river Vologne as it tosses over its stony bed amid banks golden with yellow loosestrife, or gently ripples amid fair stretches of pasture starred with the grass of Parnassus. The perpetual music of rushing, tumbling, trickling water is delightful, and even in hot weather, if it is ever indeed hot here, the mossy banks and babbling streams must give a sense of coolness. Deep down, entombed amid smiling green hills and frowning forest peaks, lies the pearl of Gérardmer, its sweet lake, a sheet of turquoise in early morn, silvery bright when the noon-day sun flashes upon it, and on grey, sunless days gloomy as Acheron itself.

Travellers stinted for time cannot properly enjoy the pastoral scenes, not the least charm of which is the frank, pleasant character of the people. Wherever we go we make friends and hear confidences. To these peasant folks, who live so secluded from the outer world, the annual



A VOSGIAN SCENE

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influx of visitors from July to September is a positive boon, moral as well as material. The women are especially confidential, inviting us into their homely yet not poverty-stricken kitchens, keeping us as long as they can whilst they chat about their own lives or ask us questions. The beauty, politeness, and clear direct speech of the children, are remarkable. Life here is laborious, but downright want I should say rare. As in the Jura, the forest gorges and park-like solitudes are disturbed by the sound of hammer and wheel, and a tall factory chimney not infrequently spoils a wild landscape. The greater part of the people gain their livelihood in the manufactories, very little land here being suitable for tillage.

Gérardmer is famous for its cheeses; another local industry is turnery and the weaving of linen, the linen manufactories employing many hands, whilst not a mountain cottage is without its handloom for winter use. Weaving at home is chiefly resorted to as a means of livelihood in winter, when the country is covered with snow and no out-door occupations are possible. Embroidery is also a special fabric of the Vosges, but its real wealth lies in mines of salt and iron, and mineral waters.

One chief feature in Gérardmer is the congeries of handsome buildings bearing the inscription

"*École Communale*," and how stringently the new educational law is enforced throughout France may be gathered from the spectacle of schoolboys at drill. We saw three squadrons, each under the charge of a separate master, evidently made up from all classes of the community. Some of the boys were poorly, nay, miserably, clad, others wore good homely clothes, a few were really well dressed.

Our first week at Gérardmer was wet and chilly. Fires and winter clothes would have been acceptable, but at last came warmth and sunshine, and we set off for the Col de la Schlucht, the grandest feature of the Vosges, and the goal of every traveller in these regions.

There is a strange contrast between the calm valley of Gérardmer, a little haven of tranquil loveliness and repose, and the awful solitude and austerity of the Schlucht, from which it is separated by a few hours only. Not even a cold grey day can turn Gérardmer into a dreary place, but in the most brilliant sunshine this mountain pass is none the less majestic and solemn. One obtains the sense of contrast by slow degrees, so that the mind is prepared for it and in the mood for it. The acme, the culminating point of Vosges scenery is thus reached by a gradually ascending scale of beauty and grandeur from the



CIRQUE DE RETOURNEMER

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moment we quit Gérardmer, till we stand on the loftiest summit of the Vosges chain, dominating the Schlucht. For the first half-hour we skirt the alder-fringed banks of the tossing, foaming little river Vologne, as it winds amid lawny spaces, on either side the fir-clad ridges rising like ramparts. Here all is gentleness and golden calm, but soon we quit this warm, sunny region, and enter the dark forest road curling upwards to the airy pinnacle to which we are bound. More than once we have to halt on our way. One must stop to look at the cascade made by the Vologne, never surely fuller than now, one of the prettiest cascades in the world, masses of snow-white foam tumbling over a long, uneven stair of granite through the midst of a fairy glen. The sound of these rushing waters is long in our ears as we continue to climb the splendid mountain road that leads to the Schlucht, and nowhere else. From a giddy terrace cut in the sides of the shelving forest ridge we now get a prospect of the little lakes of Longuemer and Retournemer, twin gems of superlative loveliness in the wildest environment. Deep down they lie, the two silvery sheets of water with their verdant holms, making a little world of peace and beauty, a toy dropped amid Titanic awfulness and splendour. The vantage ground is on the edge

of a dizzy precipice, but the picture thus sternly framed is too exquisite to be easily abandoned. We gaze and gaze in spite of the vast height from which we contemplate it; and when at last we tear ourselves away from the engaging scene, we are in a region all ruggedness and sublimity, on either side rocky scarps and gloomy forests, with reminders by the wayside that we are approaching an Alpine flora. Nothing can be wilder or more solitary than the scene. For the greater part, the forests through which our road is cut are unfrequented, except by the wild boar, deer, and wild cat, and in winter time the fine mountain roads are rendered impenetrable by the accumulation of snow.

This approach to the Col is by a tunnel cut in the granite, fit entrance to one of the wildest regions in France. The road now makes a sudden bend towards the châlet cresting the Col, and we are able in a moment to realize its tremendous position.

From our little châlet we look upon what seems no mere cleft in a mountain chain, but in the vast globe itself. This huge hollow, brought about by some strange geological perturbation, is the valley of Münster, no longer a part of French territory, but of Prussian Elsass. The road we have come by lies behind us, but another as

formidable winds under the upper mountain ridge towards Münster, whilst the pedestrian may follow a tiny green footpath that will lead him thither, right through the heart of the pass. Looking deep down we discern here and there scattered châlets amid green spaces far away. These are the homesteads or *chaumes* of the herdsmen, all smiling cheerfulness now, but deserted in winter. Except for such little dwellings, barely discernible, so distant are they, there is no break in the solitary scene, no sign of life at all.

The châlet is a fair hostelry for unfastidious travellers, its chief drawback being the propensity of tourists to get up at three o'clock in the morning in order to behold the sunrise from the Hoheneck. Good beds, good food, and from the windows, one of the finest prospects in the world, might well tempt many to linger here in spite of the disturbance above mentioned. For the lover of flowers this halting-place would be delightful.

Next morning the day dawned fair, and by eight o'clock we set off with a guide for the ascent of the Hoheneck, rather, I should say, for a long ramble over gently undulating green and flowery ways. After climbing a little beechwood, all was smoothness under our feet, and the long *détour*

we had to make in order to reach the summit was a series of the gentlest ascents, a wandering over fair meadow-land several thousand feet above the sea-level. Here we found the large yellow gentian, used in the fabrication of absinthe, and the bright yellow arnica, whilst instead of the snow-white flower of the Alpine anemone, the ground was now silvery with its feathery seed; the dark purple pansy of the Vosges was also rare. We were a month too late for the season of flowers, but the foxglove and the bright pink Epilobium still bloomed in great luxuriance.

It was a walk to remember. The air was brisk and genial, the blue sky lightly flecked with clouds, the turf fragrant with wild thyme, and before our eyes we had a panorama every moment gaining in extent and grandeur. As yet indeed the scene, the features of which we tried to make out, looked more like cloudland than solid reality. On clear days are discerned here, far beyond the rounded summits of the Vosges chain, the Rhine Valley, the Black Forest, the Jura range, and the snow-capped Alps. To-day we saw grand masses of mountains piled one above the other, and higher still a pageantry of azure and gold that seemed to belong to the clouds.

No morning could promise fairer, but hardly had we reached the goal of our walk when from

far below came an ominous sound of thunder, and we saw heavy rain-clouds dropping upon the heights we had left behind.

All hope of a fine prospect was now at an end, but instead we had a compensating spectacle. For thick and fast the clouds came pouring into one chasm after another, drifting in all directions, here a mere transparent veil drawn across the violet hills, there a golden splendour as of some smaller sun shining on a green little world. At one moment the whole vast scene was blurred and blotted with chill winter mist; soon a break was visible, and far away we gazed on a span of serene amethystine sky, barred with lines of bright gold. Not one, but a dozen, horizons—a dozen heavens —seemed there, whilst the thunder that reached us from below seemed too remote to threaten. But at last the clouds gathered in form and volume, hiding the little firmaments of violet and amber; the bright blue sky, bending over the green oasis—all vanished as if by magic. We could see no more, and nothing remained but to go back, and the quicker the better. The storm, our guide said, was too far off to reach us yet, and we might reach the châlet without being drenched to the skin, as we fortunately did. No sooner, however, were we fairly under shelter than the rain poured down in torrents and the

thunder pealed overhead. In no part of France are thunderstorms so frequent and so destructive as here, nowhere is the climate less to be depended on. A big umbrella, stout shoes, and a waterproof are as necessary in the Vosges as in our own Lake district.

We had, however, a fine afternoon for our drive back, a quick downhill journey along the edge of a tremendous precipice, clothed with beech-trees and brushwood. A most beautiful road it is, and the two little lakes looked lovely in the sunshine, encircled by gold-green swards and a delicate screen of alder branches. Through pastures white with meadow-sweet the turbulent, crystal-clear little river Vologne flowed merrily, making dozens of tiny cascades, turning a dozen mill-wheels in its course. All the air was fragrant with newly-turned hay, and never, we thought, had Gérardmer and its lake made a more captivating picture.

Excursions innumerable may be made from Gérardmer. We may drive across country to Remiremont, to Plombières, to Wesserling, to Colmar, to St. Dié, whilst these places in turn make very good centres for excursions. On no account must a visit to La Bresse be omitted. This is one of the most ancient towns in the Vosges. Like some of the villages in the Morvan

and in the department of La Nièvre, La Bresse remained till the Revolution an independent commune, a republic in miniature. The heads of families of both sexes took part in the election of magistrates, and from this patriarchal legislation there was seldom any appeal to the higher court—namely, that of Nancy. La Bresse is still a rich commune by reason of its forests and industries. The sound of the mill-wheel and hammer now disturbs these mountain solitudes, and although so isolated by natural position, this little town is no longer cut off from cosmopolitan influence. The little tavern is developing into a very fair inn. In the summer tourists from all parts of France pass through it, in carriages, on foot, occasionally on horseback. Most likely it now possesses a railway station, a newspaper kiosk, and a big hotel, as at Gérardmer!

As we drop down upon La Bresse after our climb of two hours and more, we seem to be at the world's end. Our road has led us higher and higher by dense forests and wild granite parapets, tasselled with fern and foxglove, till we suddenly wheel round upon a little straggling town marvellously placed. Deep down it lies, amid fairy-like greenery and silvery streams, whilst high above tower the rugged forest peaks and far-off blue mountains, in striking contrast.

The sloping green banks, starred with the grass of Parnassus, and musical with a dozen streams, the pastoral dwellings, each with its patch of flower garden and croft; the glades, dells and natural terraces are all sunny and gracious as can be; but round about and high above frown inaccessible granite peaks, and pitchy-black forest summits, impenetrable even at this time of the year. As we look down we see that roads have been cut round the mountain sides, and that tiny homesteads are perched wherever vantage ground is to be had, yet the impression is one of isolation and wildness. The town lies in no narrow cleft, as is the case with many little manufacturing towns in the Jura, but in a vast opening and falling back of the meeting hills and mountain tops, so that it is seen from far and wide, and long before it is approached. We had made the first part of our journey at a snail's pace. No sooner were we on the verge of the hills looking down upon La Bresse, than we set off at a desperate rate, spinning breathlessly round one mountain spur after another, till we were suddenly landed in the village street, dropped, as it seemed, from a balloon.

A curious feature to be noted in all the places I have mentioned is the outer wooden casing of the houses. This is done as a protection against

the cold, the Vosges possessing, with the Auvergne and the Limousin, the severest climate in France. La Bresse, like Gérardmer and other sweet valleys of these regions, is disfigured by huge factories, yet none can regret the fact, seeing what well-being these industries bring to the people. Beggars are numerous, but we are told they are strangers, who merely invade these regions during the tourist season.

Remiremont, our next halting-place, may be reached by a pleasant carriage drive, but the railway is more convenient to travellers encumbered with half-a-dozen trunks. The railway, moreover, cuts right through the beautiful valley of the Moselle—a prospect which is missed by road. Remiremont is charming. We do not get the creature comforts of Gérardmer, but by way of compensation we find a softer and more genial climate. The engaging little town is indeed one of nature's sanatoriums. The streets are kept clean by swift rivulets, and all the air is fragrant with encircling fir-woods. Like Gérardmer and La Bresse, however, Remiremont lies open to the sun. A belt of flowery dells, terraced orchards, and wide pastures, amid which meanders the clear blue Moselle, girds it round about, and no matter which path you take, it is sure to lead to inviting prospects. The arcades lend a Spanish

look to the town, and recall the street architecture of Lons-le-Saunier and Arbois in the Jura. Flower gardens abound, and the general atmosphere is one of prosperity and cheerfulness.

The historic interest of this now dead-alive little town centres around its lady abbesses, who for centuries held sovereign rule and state in their abbatial palace, at the present time the Hôtel de Ville. These high-born dames, like certain temporal rulers of the sex, loved battle, and more than one *chanoinesse*, when defied by feudal neighbours, mounted the breach and directed her people. One and all were of noble birth, and many doubtless possessed the intellectual distinction and personal charm of Renan's *Abbesse de Jouarre.*

There are beautiful walks about Remiremont, and one especial path amid the fragrant fir-woods leads to a curious relic of ancient time—a little chapel formerly attached to a Lazar-house. It now belongs to the adjoining farm close by, a pleasant place, with flower-garden and orchard. High up in the woods dominating the broad valley in which Remiremont is placed are some curious prehistoric stones. But more inviting than the steep climb under a burning sun—for the weather has changed on a sudden—is the drive to the Vallée d'Hérival, a drive so cool, so soothing, so

delicious, that we fancy we can never feel heated, languid, or irritated any more.

The isolated dwellings of the dalesfolk in the midst of tremendous solitudes—little pastoral scenes such as Corot loved to paint—and hemmed round by the sternest, most rugged nature, are one of the characteristics of Vosges scenery. We also find beside tossing rivers and glittering cascades a solitary linen factory or saw-mill, with the modern-looking villa of the employer, and clustered round it the cottages of the work-people. No sooner does the road curl again than we are once more in a solitude as complete as if we were in some primeval forest of the new world. We come suddenly upon the Vallée d'Hérival, but the deep close gorge we gaze upon is only the beginning of the valley within valley we have come to see. Our road makes a loop round the valley so that we see it from two levels, and under two aspects. As we return, winding upwards on higher ground, we get glimpses of sunny dimpled sward through the dark stems of the majestic fir-trees towering over our head. There is every gradation of form and colour in the picture, from the ripe warm gold barring the branches of the firs, to the pale silveriness of their upper foliage; from the gigantic trees rising from the gorge below, each seeming to fill a chasm, to the airy,

graceful birch, a mere toy beside it. Rare butterflies abound, but we see few birds.

The hardy pedestrian is an enviable person here, for although excellent carriages are to be had, some of the most interesting excursions must be made on foot.

I do not suppose that matters are very greatly changed in hotels here since my visit so many years ago. In certain respects travellers fare well. They may feast like Lucullus on fresh trout and on the dainty aniseed cakes which are a local speciality. But hygienic arrangements were almost prehistoric, and although politeness itself, mine host and hostess showed strange nonchalance towards their guests. Thus, when ringing and ringing again for our tea and bread and butter between seven and eight o'clock, the chamber—not maid, but man—informed us that Madame had gone to mass, and everything was locked up till her return.

Even the fastidious tourist, however, will hardly care to exchange his somewhat rough and noisy quarters at Remiremont for the cosmopolitan comforts of Plombières within such easy reach. It is a pretty drive of an hour and a half to Plombières, and all is prettiness there—its little park, its tiny lake, its toy town.

It is surely one of the hottest places in the

world, and like Spa, of which it reminds me, must be one of the most wearisome. Just such a promenade, with a sleepy band, just such a casino, just such a routine. This favourite resort of the third Napoleon has of late years seen many rivals springing up. Vittel, Bains, Bussang—all in the Vosges—yet it continues to hold up its head. The site is really charming, but so close is the valley in which the town lies, that it is a veritable hot-house, and the reverse, we should think, of what an invalid wants. Plombières has always had illustrious visitors—Montaigne, who upon several occasions took the waters here—Maupertuis, Voltaire, Beaumarchais, the Empress Josephine, and a host of historic personages. But the emperor may be called the creator of Plombières. The park, the fine road to Remiremont, the handsome Bain Napoleon (now National), the church, all these owe their existence to him, and during the imperial visits the remote spot suffered a strange transformation. The pretty country road along which we met a couple of carriages yesterday became as brilliant and animated as the Bois de Boulogne. It was a perpetual coming and going of fashionable personages. The emperor used to drive over to Remiremont and dine at the little dingy commercial hotel, the best in the place, making himself agreeable to everybody.

But all this is past, and nowhere throughout France is patriotism more ardent or the democratic spirit more alert than in the Vosges. The reasons are obvious. We are here on the borders of the lost provinces, the two fair and rich departments of Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin, now effaced from the map of France. Reminders of that painful severance of a vast population from its nationality are too vivid for a moment to be lost sight of. Many towns of the Vosges and of the ancient portion of Lorraine not annexed, such as Nancy, have been enriched by the immigration of large commercial firms from the other side of the new frontier. The great majority of Alsatians, by force of circumstances and family ties, were compelled to remain —French at heart, German according to law. The bitterness and intensity of this feeling, reined-in yet apparent, constitutes the one painful feature of Vosges travel. Of course there is a wide difference between the supporters of retaliation, such journals as *L'Alsacien-Lorrain*, and quiet folks who hate war, even more than a foreign domination. But the yearning towards the parent country is too strong to be overcome. No wonder that as soon as the holidays begin there is a rush of French tourists across the Vosges. From Strasburg, Metz, St. Marie aux

Mines, they flock to Gérardmer and other family resorts. And if some Frenchwoman—maybe, sober matron—dons the pretty Alsatian dress, and dances the Alsatian dance with an exile like herself, the enthusiasm is too great to be described. Lookers-on weep, shake hands, embrace each other. For a brief moment the calmest are carried away by intensity of patriotic feeling. The social aspect of Vosges travel is one of its chief charms. You must here live with French people, whether you will or no. Insular reserve cannot resist the prevailing friendliness and good-fellowship. How long such a state of things will exist, who can say? Fortunately for the lover of nature, most of the places I have mentioned are too unobtrusive ever to become popular. "Nothing to see here, and nothing to do," would surely be the verdict of most globe-trotters even on sweet Gérardmer itself!

II

THE CHARM OF ALSACE

THE CHARM OF ALSACE

THE notion of here reprinting my notes of Alsatian travel was suggested by a recent French work—*À travers l'Alsace en flânant*, from the pen of M. André Hallays. This delightful writer had already published several volumes dealing with various French provinces, more especially from an archæological point of view. In his latest and not least fascinating *flânerie* he gives the experiences of several holiday tours in Germanized France.

My own sojourns, made at intervals among French friends, *annexés* both of Alsace and Lorraine, were chiefly undertaken in order to realize the condition of the German Emperor's French subjects. But I naturally visited many picturesque sites and historic monuments in both, the forfeited territories being especially rich. Whilst volume after volume of late years have appeared devoted to French travel, holiday tourists innumerable jotting their brief experiences of well-known regions, strangely enough no English writer has followed my own example. No work has here appeared upon Alsace and

Lorraine. On the other side of the Channel a vast literature on the subject has sprung up. Novels, travels, reminiscences, pamphlets on political and economic questions, one and all breathing the same spirit, continue to appear in undiminished numbers.

Ardent spirits still fan the flame of revolt. The burning thirst for re-integration remains unquenched. Garbed in crape, the marble figure of Strasburg still holds her place on the Place de la Concorde. The French language, although rigidly prohibited throughout Germanized France, is studied and upheld more sedulously than before Sedan. And after the lapse of forty years a German minister lately averred that French Alsatians were more French than ever. *Les Noëllets* of René Bazin, M. Maurice Barrès' impassioned series, *Les Bastions de l'Est*, enjoy immense popularity, and within the last few months have appeared two volumes which fully confirm the views of their forerunners—M. Hallays' impressions of many wayfarings and *Après quarante ans* by M. Jules Claretie, the versatile, brilliant and much respected administrator-general of the Comédie Française.

Whilst in these days of peace and arbitration propaganda the crime of enforced denationalization seems more heinous than ever, there appears

little likelihood of the country conquered by Louis XIV., and re-conquered by German arms a century and a half later, again waving the Tricolour.

Let us hope, however, that some *via media* may be found, and that if not recovering its lost privilege, the passionately coveted French name, as a federal state Alsace and Lorraine may become independent and prosperous.

For a comprehensive study of Alsace and its characteristics, alike social, artistic and intellectual, readers must go to M. Hallays' volume. In every development this writer shows that a special stamp may be found. Neither Teutonic nor Gallic, art and handicrafts reveal indigenous growth, and the same feature may be studied in town and village, in palace, cathedral and cottage.

We must remember that we are here dealing with a region of very ancient civilization. Taste has been slowly developed, artistic culture is of no mushroom growth. Alsace formed the high-road between Italy and Flanders. In M. Hallays' words, already during the Renaissance, æsthetic Alsace blended the lessons of north and south, her genius was a product of good sense, experience and a feeling of proportion. And he points out how in the eighteenth century French taste influenced Alsatian faïence, woven stuffs, iron-

work, sculpture, wood-carving and furniture, even peasant interiors being thereby modified. "Alsace," he writes, "holds us spell-bound by the originality of culture and temperament found among her inhabitants. It has generally been taken for granted that native genius is here a mere blend of French and German character, that Alsatian sentiment appertains to the latter stock, intellectual development to the former, that the inhabitants think in French and imagine in German. There is a certain leaven of truth in these assumptions, but when we hold continued intercourse with all classes, listen to their speech, familiarize ourselves with their modes of life and mental outlook, we arrive again and again at one conclusion: we say to ourselves, here is an element which is neither Teutonic nor Gallic. I cannot undertake to particularize, I only note in my pages those instances that occur by the way. And the conviction that we are here penetrating a little world hitherto unknown to us, such novelty being revealed in every stroll and chat, lends extraordinary interest to our peregrination."

It is especially an artistic Alsace that M. Hallays reveals to us. Instead of visiting battlefields, he shows us that English travellers may find ample interest of other kind. The artist, the ecclesiologist, the art-loving have

here a storehouse of unrevealed treasure. A little-read but weighty writer, Mme. de Staël, has truly averred that the most beautiful lands in the world, if devoid of famous memories and if bearing no impress of great events, cannot be compared in interest to historic regions. Hardly a spot of the annexed provinces but is stamped with indelible and, alas! blood-stained records. From the tenth century until the peace of Westphalia, these territories belonged to the German empire, being ruled by sovereign dukes and princes. In 1648 portions of both provinces were ceded to France, and a few years later, in times of peace, Strasburg was ruthlessly seized and appropriated by the arch-despot and militarist, Louis XIV. By the treaty of Ryswick, that of Westphalia was ratified, and thenceforward Alsace and Lorraine remained radically and passionately French. In 1871 was witnessed an awful historic retribution, a political crime paralleling its predecessor committed by the French king two centuries before. Alsace-Lorraine still awaits the fulfilment of her destiny. Meantime, as Rachel mourning for her children, she weeps sore and will not be comforted.

Historically speaking, therefore, the annexed provinces present a strangely complex patchwork and oft-repeated palimpsest, civilization after

civilization overlapping each other. If Alsace-Lorraine has produced no Titan either in literature or art, she yet shows a goodly roll-call.

The name heading the list stands for France herself. It was a young soldier of Strasburg—not, however, Alsatian born—who, in April, 1792, composed a song that saved France from the fate of Poland and changed the current of civilization. By an irony of destiny the Tricolour no longer waves over the cradle of the Marseillaise!

That witty writer, Edmond About, as well as the "Heavenly Twins" of Alsatian fiction, was born in Lorraine, but all three so thoroughly identified themselves with this province that they must be regarded as her sons. Those travellers who, like myself, have visited Edmond About's woodland retreat in Saverne can understand the bitterness with which he penned his volume—*Alsace 1870–1*—and the concluding lines of the preface—

"If I have here uttered an untrue syllable, I give M. de Bismarck permission to treat my modest dwelling as if it were a villa of Saint Cloud."

The literary brethren whose pictures of Alsatian peasant life, both in war and peace, have become world-wide classics, suffered no less than

their brilliant contemporary, and their works written after annexation breathe equal bitterness. The celebrated partnership which began in 1848 and lasted for a quarter of a century, has been thus described by Edmond About: "The two friends see each other very rarely, whether in Paris or in the Vosges. When they do meet, they together elaborate the scheme of a new work. Then Erckmann writes it. Chatrian corrects it —and sometimes puts it in the fire!" One at least of their plays enjoys equal popularity with the novel from which it is drawn. To have witnessed *L'Ami Fritz* at Molière's house in the last decade of the nineteenth century was an experience to remember. That consummate artist, Got, was at his very best—if the superlative in such a case is applicable—as the good old Rabbi. No less enchanting was Mlle. Reichenbach, the *doyenne* of the Comédie Française, as Suzel. Of this charming artist Sarcey wrote that, having attained her sixteenth year, there she made the long-stop, never oldening with others. *L'Ami Fritz* is, in reality, a German bucolic, the scene being laid in Bavaria. But it has long been accepted as a classic, and on the stage it becomes thoroughly French. This delightful story was written in 1864, that is to say, before any war-cloud had arisen over the eastern frontier, and

before the evocation of a fiend as terrible, the anti-Jewish crusade culminating in the Dreyfus crime.

It is painful to reflect that whilst twenty years ago the engaging old Jew of this piece was vociferously acclaimed on the first French stage, the drama of a gifted Jewish writer has this year been banned in Paris!

Edmond About and Erckmann and Chatrian belong to the same period as another native, and more famous, genius, the precocious, superabundantly endowed Gustave Doré. Of this "admirable Crichton" I give a sketch.

For mere holiday-makers in search of exhilaration and beauty, Alsace offers attractions innumerable, sites grandiose and idyllic, picturesque ruins, superb forests, old churches of rare interest and many a splendid historic pile.

There are naturally drawbacks to intense lovers of France. Throughout M. Hallays' volume he acknowledges the courtesy of German officials, a fact to which I had borne testimony when first journalizing my own experiences. Certain aspects of enforced Germanization can but afflict all outsiders. There is firstly that obtrusive militarism from which we cannot for a moment escape. Again, a no less false note strikes us in matters æsthetic. Modern German taste in art, archi-

tecture and decoration do not harmonize with the ancientness and historic severity of Alsace. The restoration of Hohkönigsburg and the new quarters of Strasburg are instances in point. All who visited the German art section of the Paris Exhibition in 1900 will understand this disharmony.

The reminiscences of my second and third journeys in Alsace and Lorraine having already appeared in volume form, still in print (*East of Paris*), are therefore omitted here. For the benefit of English travellers in the annexed portion of the last-named province I cite a passage from M. Maurice Barrès' beautiful story, *Colette Baudoche*. His hero is German and his heroine French, a charming *Messine* or native of Metz. In company of Colette's mother and a friend or two, the *fiancés* take part in a little festival held at Gorze, a village near the blood-stained fields of Gravelotte and Mars-la-Tour—

"At Gorze, church, lime-trees, dwellings and folks belong to the olden time, that is to say, all are very French. . . . In crossing the square the five holiday-makers halted before the Hôtel de Ville and read with interest a commemorative inscription on the walls. A tablet records English generosity in 1870, when, after the carnage and devastation of successive battles, money, roots

and seeds were distributed among the peasants by a relief committee. The inspection over, the little party gaily sat down to dinner in an inn close by, regaling themselves with fried English potatoes, descendants of those sent across the Manche forty years before."

As I re-read this passage I think sadly how the tribute from such a pen would have rejoiced the two moving spirits of that famous relief committee—Sir John Robinson and Mr. Bullock Hall, both long since passed away. To the whilom editor of the *Daily News* both initiative and realization were mainly owing, the latter being the laborious and devoted agent of distribution.

But an omission caused bitterness. Whilst Mr. Bullock Hall most deservedly received the Red Ribbon, his leader was overlooked. The tens of thousands of pounds collected by Sir John Robinson which may be said to have kept alive starving people and vivified deserts, were gratefully acknowledged by the French Government. By some unaccountable misconception, the decoration here only gratified one good friend of France.

"I should much have liked the Legion of Honour," sighed the kindly old editor to me, a year or two before he died.

I add that my second sojourn in Alsace-Lorraine was made at Sir John's suggestion, the series of

papers dealing with Metz, Strasburg, and its neighbourhood appearing from day to day in the *Daily News*.

English tourists must step aside and read the tablet on the Hôtel de Ville of Gorze, reminder, by the way, of the Entente Cordiale!

III

IN GUSTAVE DORÉ'S COUNTRY

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THE Vosges and Alsace-Lorraine must be taken together, as the tourist is constantly compelled to zigzag across the new frontier. Many of the most interesting points of departure for excursionizing in the Vosges lie in Alsace-Lorraine, while few travellers who have got so far as Gérardmer or St. Dié will not be tempted to continue their journey, at least as far as the beautiful valleys of Münster and St. Marie-aux-Mines, both peopled by French people under German domination. Arrived at either of these places, the tourist will be at a loss which route to take of the many open to him. On the one hand are the austere sites of the Vosges, impenetrable forests darkening the rounded mountain tops, granite precipices silvered with perpetual cascades, awful ravines hardly less gloomy in the noonday sun than in wintry storms, and as a relief to these sombre features, the sunniest little homesteads perched on airy terraces of gold-green; crystal streams making vocal the flowery meadow and the mossy dell, and lovely little lakes shut in

by rounded hills, made double in their mirror. In Alsace-Lorraine we find a wholly different landscape, and are at once reminded that we are in one of the fairest and most productive districts of Europe. All the vast Alsatian plain in September is a-bloom with fruit garden and orchard, vineyard and cornfield, whilst as a gracious framework, a romantic background to the picture, are the vine-clad heights crested with ruined castles and fortresses worthy to be compared to Heidelberg and Ehrenbreitstein. We had made a leisurely journey from Gérardmer to St. Dié, bishopric and *chef-lieu* of the department of the Vosges, without feeling sure of our next move. Fortunately a French acquaintance advised us to drive to St. Marie-aux-Mines, one of the most wonderful little spots in these regions, of which we had never before heard. A word or two, however, concerning St. Dié itself, one of the most ancient monastic foundations in France. The town is pleasant enough, and the big hotel not bad, as French hotels go. But in the Vosges, the tourist gets somewhat spoiled in the matter of hotels. Wherever we go our hosts are so much interested in us, and make so much of us, that we feel aggrieved at sinking into mere numbers three or four. Many of these little inns offer homely accommodation, but the landlord and landlady

themselves wait upon the guests, unless, which often happens, the host is cook, no piece of ill-fortune for the traveller! These good people have none of the false shame often conspicuous among the same class in England. At Remiremont, our hostess came bustling down at the last moment saying how she had hurried to change her dress in order to bid us good-bye. Here the son-in-law, a fine handsome fellow, was the cook, and when dinner was served he used to emerge from his kitchen and chat with the guests or play with his children in the cool evening hour. There is none of that differentiation of labour witnessed in England, and on the whole the stranger fares none the worse. With regard to French hotels generally the absence of competition in large towns strikes an English mind. At St. Dié, as in many other places, there was at the time of my visit but one hotel, which had doubtless been handed down from generation to generation, simply because no rival aroused a spirit of emulation.

St. Dié has a pleasant environment in the valley of the Meurthe, and may be made the centre of many excursions. Its picturesque old Romanesque cathedral of red sandstone, about which are grouped noble elms, grows upon the eye; more interesting and beautiful by far are the Gothic cloisters leading from within to the smaller

church adjoining. These delicate arcades, in part restored, form a quadrangle. Greenery fills the open space, and wild antirrhinum and harebell brighten the grey walls. Springing from one side is an out-of-door pulpit carved in stone, a striking and suggestive object in the midst of the quiet scene. We should like to know what was preached from that stone pulpit, and what manner of man was the preacher. The bright green space, the delicate arcades of soft grey, the bits of foliage here and there, with the two silent churches blocking in all, make up an impressive scene.

We wanted the country, however, rather than the towns, so after a few days at St. Dié, hired a carriage to take us to St. Marie-aux-Mines or Markirch, on the German side of the frontier, and not accessible from this side by rail. We enter Alsace, indeed, by a needle's eye, so narrow the pass in which St. Marie lies. Here a word of warning to the tourist. Be sure to examine your carriage and horses well before starting. We were provided for our difficult drive with what Spenser calls "two unequal beasts," namely, a trotting horse and a horse that could only canter, with a very uncomfortable carriage, the turnout costing over a pound—pretty well, that, for a three hours' drive. However, in spite of dis-

comfort, we would not have missed the journey on any account. The site of this little cotton-spinning town is one of the most extraordinary in the world. We first traverse a fruitful, well cultivated plain, watered by the sluggish Meurthe, then begin to ascend a spur of the western chain of the Vosges, formerly dividing the two French departments of Vosges and Haut Rhin, now marking the boundaries of France and German Elsass. Down below, amid the hanging orchards, flower-gardens and hayfields, we were on French soil, but the flagstaff, just discernible on yonder green pinnacles, marks the line of demarcation between France and the conquered territory of the German empire. For the matter of that, the Prussian helmet makes the fact patent. As surely as we have set foot in the Reich, we see one of these gleaming casques, so hateful still in French eyes. They seem to spring from the ground like Jason's warriors from the dragon's teeth. This new frontier divided in olden times the dominions of Alsace and Lorraine, when it was the custom to say of many villages that the bread was kneaded in one country and baked in the other.

Nothing could be more lovely than the dim violet hills far away, and the virginal freshness of the pastoral scenery around. But only a stout-hearted pedestrian can properly enjoy this beau-

tiful region. We had followed the example of another party of tourists in front of us, and accomplished a fair climb on foot, and when we had wound and wound our way up the lofty green mountain to the flagstaff before mentioned, we wanted to do the rest of our journey on foot also. But alike compassion for the beasts and energy had gone far enough, we were only too glad to reseat ourselves, and drive, or rather be whirled, down to St. Marie-aux-Mines in the vehicle. Do what we would there was no persuading our driver to slacken pace enough so as to admit of a full enjoyment of the prospect that unfolded before us.

The wonderful little town! Black pearl set in the richest casket! This commonplace, flourishing centre of cotton spinning, woollen, and cretonne manufacture, built in red brick, lies in the narrow, beautiful valley of the Lièpvrette, as it is called from the babbling river of that name. But there is really no valley at all. The congeries of red-roofed houses, factory chimneys and church towers, Catholic and Protestant, is hemmed round by a narrow gorge, wedged in between the hills which are just parted so as to admit of such an intrusion, no more. The green convolutions of the mountain sides are literally folded round the town, a pile of green velvet

spread fan-like in a draper's window has not softer, neater folds! As we enter it from the St. Dié side we find just room for a carriage to wind along the little river and the narrow street. But at the other end the valley opens, and St. Marie-aux-mines spreads itself out. Here are factories, handsome country houses, and walks up-hill and down-hill in abundance. Just above the town, over the widening gorge, is a deliciously cool pine-wood which commands a vast prospect—the busy little town caught in the toils of the green hills; the fertile valley of the Meurthe as we gaze in the direction from which we have come; the no less fertile plains of Lorraine before us; close under and around us, many a dell and woodland covert with scattered homes of dalesfolk in sunny places and slanting hills covered with pines. It is curious to reflect that St. Marie-aux-Mines, mentioned as Markirch in ancient charts, did not become entirely French till the eighteenth century. Originally the inhabitants on the left bank of the Lièpvrette were subjects of the Dukes of Lorraine, spoke French, and belonged to the Catholic persuasion, whilst those dwelling on the right bank of the river, adhered to the seigneury of Ribeaupaire, and formed a Protestant German-speaking community. Alsace, as everybody knows, was annexed to France by right—rather

III

IN GUSTAVE DORÉ'S COUNTRY

These pine-woods and frowning ruins set like sentinels on every green hill or rocky eminence, recall many of Doré's happiest efforts. "*Le pauvre garçon,*" our hostess said. "*Comme il était content chez nous!*" I can fancy how Doré would enjoy the family life of our little old-fashioned hotel, how he would play with the children, chat with master and mistress, and make himself agreeable all round. One can also fancy how animated conversation would become if it chanced to take a patriotic turn. For people speak their thoughts in Alsace,—nowhere more freely. In season and out of season, the same sentiment comes to the surface. "*Nous sommes plus Français que les Français.*" This is the universal expression of feeling that greeted our ears throughout our wanderings. Such, at least, was formerly the case. The men, women and children, rich and poor, learned and simple, gave utterance to the same expression of feeling. Barr is a town of between six and seven thousand souls, about twenty of whom are Prussians. A pleasant position, truly, for the twenty officials! And what we see at Barr is the case throughout the newly acquired German dominion. Alike the highest as well as the humblest functionary of the imperial government is completely shut off from intercourse with his French neighbours.

Barr lies near so much romantic scenery that the tourist in these parts had better try the little hotel amid the mines. For, in spite of the picturesque stork's nest close by, an excellent ordinary and the most delightful host and hostess in the world, I cannot recommend a sojourn in the heart of the town. The best plan of all were to halt here simply for the sake of the excursion to St. Odile—St. Odile leads nowhither—then hire a carriage, and make leisurely way across country by the Hohwald, and the Champ de Feu to Rothau, Oberlin's country, thence to Strasburg. In our own case, the fascinations of our hosts overcame our repugnance to Barr itself, so we stayed on, every day making long drives into the fresh, quiet, beautiful country. One of the sweet spots we discovered for the benefit of any English folks who may chance to stray in that region is the Hohwald, a *villegiatura* long in vogue with the inhabitants of Strasburg and neighbouring towns, but not mentioned in any English guide-book at the time of my visit.

We are reminded all the way of Rhineland. The same terraced vineyards, the same limestone crags, each with its feudal tower, the same fertility and richness everywhere. Our road winds for miles amid avenues of fruit-trees, laden with pear and plum, whilst on every side are stretches of flax

and corn, tobacco and hemp. What plenty and fruitfulness are suggested at every turn! Well might Goethe extol "this magnificent Alsace." We soon reach Andlau, a picturesque, but, it must be confessed, somewhat dirty village, lying amid vineyards and chestnut woods, with mediæval gables, archways, wells, dormers. All these are to be found at Andlau, also one of the finest churches in these parts. I followed the *curé* and sacristan as they took a path that wound high above the village and the little river amid the vineyards, and obtained a beautiful picture; hill and dale, clustered village and lofty spire, and imposingly, confronting us at every turn, the fine façade of the castle of Andlau, built of grey granite, and flanked at either end with massive towers. More picturesque, but less majestic are the neighbouring ruins of Spesburg, mere tumbling walls wreathed with greenery, and many another castled crag we see on our way. We are indeed in the land of old romance. Nothing imaginable more weird, fantastic and sombre, than these spectral castles and crumbling towers past counting! The wide landscape is peopled with these. They seem to rise as if by magic from the level landscape, and we fancy that they will disappear magically as they have come. And here again one wild visionary scene after another reminds

us that we are in the land of Doré's most original inspiration. There are bits of broken pine-wood, jagged peaks and ghostly ruins that have been already made quite familiar to us in the pages of his *Dante* and *Don Quixote*.

The pretty rivulet Andlau accompanies us far on our way, and beautiful is the road; high above, beech- and pine-woods, and sloping down to the road green banks starred with large blue and white campanula, with, darkling amid the alders, the noisy little river.

The Hohwald is the creation of a woman; that is to say, the Hohwald of holiday-makers, tourists and tired brain-workers. "Can you imagine," wrote M. Edmond About, forty years ago, "an inn at the world's end that cost a hundred thousand francs in the building? I assure you the owner will soon have recouped her outlay. She had not a centime to begin with, this courageous lady, left a widow without resources, and a son to bring up. The happy thought occurred to her of a summer resort in the heart of these glorious woods, within easy reach of Strasburg." There are gardens and reception-rooms in common, and here as at Gérardmer croquet, music and the dance offer an extra attraction. It must be admitted that these big family hotels, in attractive country places with prices adapted to all travel-

lers, have many advantages over our own seaside lodgings. People get much more for their money, better food, better accommodation, with agreeable society into the bargain, and a relief from the harass of housekeeping. The children, too, find companionship, to the great relief of parents and nursemaids.

The Hohwald proper is a tiny village numbering a few hundred souls, situated in the midst of magnificent forests at the foot of the famous Champ de Feu. This is a plateau on one of the loftiest summits of the Vosges, and very curious from a geological point of view. To explore it properly you must be a good pedestrian. Much, indeed, of the finest scenery of these regions is beyond reach of travellers who cannot walk five or six hours a day.

Any one, however, may drive to St. Odile, and St. Odile is the great excursion of Alsace. Who cares a straw for the saint and her story now? But all tourists must be grateful to the Bishop of Strasburg, who keeps a comfortable little inn at the top of the mountain, and, beyond the prohibition of meat on fast-days, smoking, noise and levity of manner on all days, makes you very comfortable for next to nothing.

The fact is, this noble plateau, commanding as splendid a natural panorama as any in Europe,

at the time I write of the property of Monseigneur of Strasburg, was once a famous shrine and a convent of cloistered men and women vowed to sanctity and prayer. The convent was closed at the time of the French Revolution, and the entire property, convent, mountain and prospect, remained in the hands of private possessors till 1853, when the prelate of that day repurchased the whole, restored the conventual building, put in some lay brethren to cultivate the soil, and some lay sisters, who wear the garb of nuns, but have taken no vows upon them except of piety, to keep the little inn and make tourists comfortable. No arrangement could be better, and I advise any one in want of pure air, superb scenery, and complete quiet, to betake himself to St. Odile.

Here again I must intercalate. Since these lines were jotted down, many changes, and apparently none for the better, have taken place here. Intending tourists must take both M. Hallays' volume and Maurice Barrès' *Au Service d'Allemagne* for recent accounts of this holiday resort. The splendid natural features remain intact.

The way from Barr lies through prosperous villages, enriched by manufactories, yet abounding in pastoral graces. There are English-like parks and fine châteaux of rich manufacturers;

but contrasted with these nothing like abject poverty. The houses of working-folk are clean, each with its flower-garden, the children are neatly dressed, no squalor or look of discontent to be seen anywhere. Every hamlet has its beautiful spire, whilst the country is the fairest, richest conceivable; in the woods is seen every variety of fir and pine, mingled with the lighter foliage of chestnut and acacia, whilst every orchard has its walnut and mulberry trees, not to speak of pear and plum. One of the chief manufactures of these parts is that of paints and colours: there are also ribbon and cotton factories. Rich as is the country naturally, its chief wealth arises from these industries. In every village you hear the hum of machinery.

You may lessen the distance from Barr to St. Odile by one-half if you make the journey on foot, winding upwards amid the vine-clad hills, at every turn coming upon one of those grand old ruins, as plentiful here as in Rhineland, and quite as romantic and beautiful. The drive is a slow and toilsome ascent of three hours and a half. As soon as we quit the villages and climb the mountain road cut amid the pines, we are in a superb and solitary scene. No sound of mill-wheels or steam-hammers is heard here, only the summer breeze stirring the lofty pine branches,

the hum of insects, and the trickling of mountain streams. The dark-leaved henbane is in brilliant yellow flower, and the purple foxglove in striking contrast; but the wealth of summer flowers is over.

Who would choose to live on Ararat? Yet it is something to reach a pinnacle from whence you may survey more than one kingdom. The prospect from St. Odile is one to gaze on for a day, and to make us dizzy in dreams ever after. From the umbrageous terrace in front of the convent—cool and breezy on this, one of the hottest days of a hot season—we see, as from a balloon, a wonderful bit of the world spread out like a map at our feet. The vast plain of Alsace, the valley of the Rhine, the Swiss mountains, the Black Forest, Bâle, and Strasburg—all these we dominate from our airy pinnacle close, at it seems, under the blue vault of heaven. But though they were there, we did not see them: for the day, as so often happens on such occasions, was misty. We had none the less a novel and wonderful prospect. As we sit on this cool terrace, under the shady mulberry trees, and look far beyond the richly-wooded mountain we have scaled on our way, we gradually make out some details of the fast panorama, one feature after another becoming visible as stars shining faintly in a misty heaven.

Villages and little towns past counting, each with its conspicuous spire, break the monotony of the enormous plain. Here and there, miles away, a curl of white vapour indicates the passage of some railway train, whilst in this upper stillness sweet sounds of church bells reach us from hamlets close underneath the convent. Nothing can be more solid, fresher, or more brilliant than the rich beech- and pine-woods running sheer from our airy eminence to the level world below, nothing more visionary, slumberous, or dimmer than that wide expanse teeming, as we know, with busy human life, yet flat and motionless as a picture.

On clear nights the electric lights of the railway station at Strasburg are seen from this point; but far more attractive than the prospects from St. Odile is its prehistoric wall. Before the wall, however, came the dinner, which deserves mention. It was Friday, so in company of priests, nuns, monks and divers pious pilgrims, with a sprinkling of fashionable ladies from Strasburg, and tourists generally, we sat down to a very fair *menu* for a fast-day, to wit: rice-soup, turnips and potatoes, eggs, perch, macaroni-cheese, custard pudding, gruyère cheese, and fair vin ordinaire. Two shillings was charged per head, and I must say people got their money's worth,

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THE PINNACLE OF ODILE
Drawn by Georges Conrad

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for appetites seem keen in these parts. The mother-superior, a kindly old woman, evidently belonging to the working class, bustled about and shook hands with each of her guests. After dinner we were shown the bedrooms, which are very clean; for board and lodging you pay six francs a day, out of which, judging from the hunger of the company, the profit arising would be small except to clerical hotel-keepers. We must bear in mind that nuns work without pay, and that all the fish, game, dairy and garden produce the bishop gets for nothing. However, all tourists must be glad of such a hostelry, and the nuns are very obliging. One sister made us some afternoon tea very nicely (we always carry tea and teapot on these excursions), and everybody made us welcome. We found a delightful old Frenchman of Strasburg to conduct us to the Pagan Wall, as, for want of a better name, people designate this famous relic of prehistoric times. Fragments of stone fortifications similarly constructed have been found on other points of the Vosges not far from the promontory on which the convent stands, but none to be compared to this one in colossal proportions and completeness.

We dip deep down into the woods on quitting the convent gates, then climb for a little space

and come suddenly upon the edge of the plateau, which the wall was evidently raised to defend. Never did a spot more easily lend itself to such rude defence by virtue of natural position, although where the construction begins the summit of the promontory is inaccessible from below. We are skirting dizzy precipices, feathered with light greenery and brightened with flowers, but awful notwithstanding, and in many places the stones have evidently been piled together rather for the sake of symmetry than from a sense of danger. The points thus protected were already impregnable. When we look more nearly we see that however much Nature may have aided these primitive constructors, the wall is mainly due to the agency of man. There is no doubt that in many places the stupendous masses of conglomerate have been hurled to their places by earthquake, but the entire girdle of stone, of pyramidal size and strength, shows much symmetrical arrangement and dexterity. The blocks have been selected according to size and shape, and in many places mortised together. We find no trace of cement, a fact disproving the hypothesis that the wall may have been of Roman origin. We must doubtless go much farther back, and associate these primitive builders with such relics of prehistoric times as the stones of Carnac

and Lokmariaker. And not to seek so wide for analogies, do we not see here the handiwork of the same rude architects I have before alluded to in my Vosges travels, who flung a stone bridge across the forest gorge above Remiremont and raised in close proximity the stupendous monolith of Kirlinkin? The prehistoric stone monuments scattered about these regions are as yet new to the English archæologist, and form one of the most interesting features of Vosges and Alsatian travel.

We may follow these lightly superimposed blocks of stone for miles, and the *enceinte* has been traced round the entire plateau, which was thus defended from enemies on all sides. As we continue our walk on the inner side of the wall we get lovely views of the dim violet hills, the vast golden plain, and, close underneath, luxuriant forests. Eagles are flying hither and thither, and except for an occasional tourist or two, the scene is perfectly solitary. An hour's walk brings us to the Menelstein, a vast and lofty platform of stone, ascended by a stair, both untouched by the hand of man. Never was a more formidable redoubt raised by engineering skill. Nature here helped her primitive builders well. From a terrace due to the natural formation of the rock, we obtain another of those grand and varied

panoramas so numerous in this part of the world, but the beauty nearer at hand is more enticing. Nothing can exceed the freshness and charm of our homeward walk. We are now no longer following the wall, but free to enjoy the breezy, heather-scented plateau, and the broken, romantic outline of St. Odile, the Wartburg of Alsace, as the saint herself was its Holy Elizabeth, and with as romantic a story for those with a taste for such legends.

Here and there on the remoter wooded peaks are stately ruins of feudal castles, whilst all the way our path lies amid bright foliage of young forest trees, chestnut and oak, pine and acacia, and the ground is purple with heather. Blocks of the conglomerate used in the construction of the so-called Pagan Wall meet us at every turn, and as we gaze down the steep sides of the promontory we can trace its massive outline. A scene not soon to be forgotten! The still, solitary field of Carnac, with its avenues of monoliths, is not more impressive than these Cyclopean walls, thrown as a girdle round the green slopes of St. Odile.

We would fain have stayed here some time, but much more still remained to be seen and accomplished in Alsace. Rothau, the district known as the Ban de la Roche, where Oberlin

laboured for sixty years, Thann, Wesserling, with a sojourn among French subjects of the German Empire at Mulhouse—all these things had to be done, and the bright summer days were drawing to an end.

IV

FROM BARR TO STRASBURG, MULHOUSE AND BELFORT

FROM BARR TO STRASBURG

THE opening sentences of this chapter, written many years ago, are no longer applicable. Were I to revisit Alsace-Lorraine at the present time, I should only hear French speech among intimate friends and in private, so strictly of late years has the law of lèse-majesté been, and is still, enforced.

Nothing strikes the sojourner in Alsace-Lorraine more forcibly than the outspokenness of its inhabitants regarding Prussian rule. Young and old, rich and poor, wise and simple alike unburden themselves to their chance-made English acquaintance with a candour that is at the same time amusing and pathetic. For the most part no heed whatever is paid to possible German listeners. At the ordinaries of country hotels, by the shop door, in the railway carriage, Alsatians will pour out their hearts, especially the women, who, as two pretty sisters assured us, are not interfered with, be their conversation of the most treasonable kind. We travelled with these two charming girls from Barr to Rothau,

and they corroborated what we had already heard at Barr and other places. The Prussian inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine—for the most part Government officials—are completely shut off from all social intercourse with the French population, the latter, of course, still forming the vast majority. Thus at Barr, a town consisting of over six thousand inhabitants, only a score or two are Prussians, who are employed in the railway and postal service, the police, the survey of forests, etc. The position of these officials is far from agreeable, although, on the other hand, there is compensation in the shape of higher pay, and much more material comfort, even luxury, than are to be had in the Fatherland. Alsace-Lorraine, especially by comparison with Prussia, may be called a land of Goshen, overflowing with milk and honey. The vine ripens on these warm hill-sides and rocky terraces, the plain produces abundant variety of fruit and vegetables, the streams abound with trout and the forests with game. No wonder, therefore, that whilst thousands of patriotic Alsatians have already quitted the country, thousands of Prussians are ready to fill their places. But the Alsatian exodus is far from finished. At first, as was only natural, the inhabitants could not realize the annexation. They refused to believe that the Prussian occupation was final, so, for the most

part, stayed on, hoping against hope. The time of illusion is past. French parents of children born since the war had to decide whether their sons are to become Prussian or French citizens. After the age of sixteen a lad's fate is no longer in their hands; he must don the uniform so odious in French eyes, and renounce the cherished *patrie* and *tricolor* for ever.

The enforced military service, necessitated, perhaps, by the new order of things, is the bitterest drop in the cup of the Alsatians. Only the poorest, and those who are too much hampered by circumstances to evade it, resign themselves to the enrolment of their sons in the German army. For this reason well-to-do parents, and even many in the humbler ranks of life, are quitting the country in much larger numbers than is taken account of, whilst all who can possibly afford it send their young sons across the frontier for the purpose of giving them a French education. The prohibition of French in the public schools and colleges is another grievous condition of annexation. Alsatians of all ranks are therefore under the necessity of providing private masters for their children, unless they would let them grow up in ignorance of their mother tongue. And here a word of explanation may be necessary. Let no strangers in Alsace

take it for granted that because a great part of the rural population speak a *patois* made up of bad German and equally bad French, they are any more German at heart for all that. Some of the most patriotic French inhabitants of Alsace can only express themselves in this dialect, a fact that should not surprise us, seeing the amalgamation of races that has been going on for many generations.

Physically speaking, so far the result has been satisfactory. In Alsace-Lorraine no one can help being struck with the fine appearance of the people. The men are tall, handsome, and well made, the women graceful and often exceedingly lovely, French piquancy and symmetrical proportions combined with Teutonic fairness of complexion, blonde hair, and blue eyes.

I will now continue my journey from Barr to Strasburg by way of the Ban de la Roche, Oberlin's country. A railway connects Barr with Rothau, a very pleasant halting-place in the midst of sweet pastoral scenery. It is another of those resorts in Alsace whither holiday folks flock from Strasburg and other towns during the long vacation, in quest of health, recreation and society.

Rothau is a very prosperous little town, with large factories, handsome châteaux of mill-

owners, and trim little cottages, having flowers in all the windows and a trellised vine in every garden. Pomegranates and oleanders are in full bloom here and there, and the general aspect is bright and cheerful. At Rothau are several *blanchisseries* or laundries, on a large scale, employing many hands, besides dye-works and saw-mills. Through the town runs the little river Bruche, and the whole district, known as the Ban de la Roche, a hundred years ago one of the dreariest regions in France, is now all smiling fertility. The principal building is its handsome Protestant church—for here we are among Protestants, although of a less zealous temper than their forefathers, the fervid Anabaptists. I attended morning service, and although an eloquent preacher from Paris officiated, the audience was small, and the general impression that of coldness and want of animation.

From the sweet, fragrant valley of Rothau a road winds amid green hills and by the tumbling river to the little old-world village of Foudai, where Oberlin lies buried. The tiny church and shady churchyard lie above the village, and a more out-of-the-way spot than Foudai itself can hardly be imagined. Yet many a pious pilgrim finds it out and comes hither to pay a tribute to the memory of "Papa Oberlin," as he was art-

lessly called by the country folk. This is the inscription at the head of the plain stone slab marking his resting-place; and very suggestive it is of the relation between the pastor and his flock. Oberlin's career of sixty years among the primitive people of the Ban de la Roche was rather that of a missionary among an uncivilized race than of a country priest among his parishioners. How he toiled, and how he induced others to toil, in order to raise the material as well as moral and spiritual conditions of his charges, is pretty well known. His story reads like the German narrative, *Des Goldmachers Dorf*. Nor does it require any lively fancy to picture what this region must have been like before Oberlin and his fellow-workers made the wilderness to blossom as the rose. The soil is rocky and barren, the hill-sides whitened with mountain streams, the more fertile spots isolated and difficult of access. An elaborate system of irrigation has now clothed the valleys with rich pastures, the river turns a dozen wheels, and every available inch of soil has been turned to account. The cottages with orchards and flower-gardens are trim and comfortable. The place in verity is a veritable little Arcadia. No less so is Waldersbach, which was Oberlin's home. The little river winding amid hayfields and fruit-trees leads us thither

from Foudai in half-an-hour. It is Sunday afternoon, and a fête day. Young and old in Sunday garb are keeping holiday, the lads and lasses waltzing, the children enjoying swings and peep-shows. No acerbity has lingered among these descendants of the austere parishioners of Oberlin. Here, as at Foudai, the entire population is Protestant. The church and parsonage lie at the back of the village, and we were warmly welcomed by the pastor and his wife, a great-great-granddaughter of Oberlin. Their six pretty children were playing in the garden with two young girls in the costume of Alsace, forming a pleasant domestic picture. Our hosts showed us many relics of Oberlin, the handsome cabinets and presses of carved oak, in which were stored the family wardrobe and other treasures, and in the study the table on which he habitually wrote. This is a charming upper room with wide views over the green hills and sunny, peaceful valley.

We were offered hospitality for days, nay, weeks, if we chose to stay, and even the use of Oberlin's study to sit and write in! A summer might be pleasantly spent here, with quiet mornings in this cheerful chamber, full of pious memories, and in the afternoon long rambles with the children over the peaceful hills. From Foudai, too, you may climb the wild rocky plateau

known as the Champ de Feu—no spot in the Vosges chain is more interesting from a geological point of view.

After much pleasant talk we took leave of our kind hosts, not going away, however, without visiting the church. A tablet with medallion portrait of Oberlin bears the touching inscription that for fifty-nine years he was "the father of this parish." Then we drove back as we had come, stopping at Foudai to rest the horse and drink tea. We were served in a cool little parlour opening on to a garden, and so tempting looked the tiny inn that we regretted we could not stay there a week. A pleasant pastoral country rather than romantic or picturesque is the Ban de la Roche, but close at hand is the lofty Donon, which may be climbed from Rothau or Foudai, and there are many other excursions within reach.

Here, for the present, the romance of Alsace travel ends, and all is prose of a somewhat painful kind. The first object that attracted our attention on reaching Strasburg was the new railway station, of which we had already heard so much. This handsome structure, erected by the German Government at an enormous cost, had only been recently opened, and so great was the soreness of feeling excited by certain allegorical bas-reliefs decorating the façade that for many days after

the opening of the station police-officers in plain clothes carefully watched the crowd of spectators, carrying off the more seditious to prison. To say the least of it, these mural decorations are not in the best of taste, and at any rate it would have been better to have withheld them for a time. The two small bas-reliefs in question bear respectively the inscription, "*Im alten, und im neuen Reich*" ("In the old and new Empire"), improved by a stander-by, to the great relish of others, thus, "*Im alten, reich, im neuen, arm*" ("In the old, rich, in the new, poor"). They give a somewhat ideal representation of the surrender of Strasburg to the German Emperor. But the bombardment of their city, the destruction of public monuments and the loss of life and property thereby occasioned, were as yet fresh in the memories of the inhabitants, and they needed no such reminder of the new state of things. Their better feelings towards Germany had been bombarded out of them, as an Alsacienne wittily observed to the Duchess of Baden after the surrender. The duchess, daughter to the Emperor William, made the round of the hospitals, and not a single Alsatian soldier but turned his face to the wall, whereupon she expressed her astonishment at not finding a better sentiment. Nor can the lover of art help drawing a painful

contrast between the Strasburg of the old and the new *régime*. There was very little to see at Strasburg except the cathedral at this time. The Library, with its 300,000 volumes and 1,500 manuscripts—the priceless *Hortus Deliciarium* of the twelfth century, richly illuminated and ornamented with miniatures invaluable to the student of men and manners of the Middle Ages, the missal of Louis XII., bearing his arms, the *Recueil de Prières* of the eighth century—all these had been completely destroyed by the ruthless Prussian bombardment. The Museum, rich in *chefs d'œuvre* of the French school, both of sculpture and painting, the handsome Protestant church, the theatre, the Palais de Justice, all shared the same fate, not to speak of buildings of lesser importance, including four hundred private dwellings, and of the fifteen hundred civilians, men, women and children, killed and wounded by the shells. The fine church of St. Thomas suffered greatly. Nor was the cathedral spared, and it would doubtless have perished altogether, too, but for the enforced surrender of the heroic city. On my second visit ten years later I found immense changes, new German architecture to be seen everywhere.

Strasburg is said to contain a much larger German element than any other city of Alsace-

Lorraine, but the most casual observer soon finds out how it stands with the bulk of the people. The first thing that attracted our notice in a shop window was a coloured illustration representing the funeral procession of Gambetta, as it wound slowly past the veiled statue of Strasburg on the Place de la Concorde. These displays of patriotic feeling are forbidden, but they come to the fore all the same. Here, as elsewhere, the clinging to the old country is pathetically—sometimes comically—apparent. A rough peasant girl, employed as chambermaid in the hotel at which we stayed, amused me not a little by her tirades against the Prussians, spoken in a language that was neither German nor French, but a mixture of both—the delectable tongue of 'Alsace!

Strasburg is now a vast camp, with that perpetual noisy military parade so wearisome in Berlin and other German cities, and, as I have said, there was very little to see. It was a relief to get to Mulhouse, the comparatively quiet and thoroughly French city of Mulhouse, in spite of all attempts to make it German. But for the imperial eagle placed over public offices and the sprinkling of Prussian helmets and Prussian physiognomies, we could hardly suppose ourselves outside the French border. The shops are

French. French is the language of the better classes, and French and Jews make up the bulk of the population. The Jews from time immemorial have swarmed in Alsace, where, I am sorry to say, they seemed to be little liked.

This thoroughly French appearance of Mulhouse, to be accounted for, moreover, by an intensely patriotic clinging to the mother country, naturally occasions great vexation to the German authorities. It is, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at that undignified provocations and reprisals should be the consequence. Thus the law forbids the putting up of French signboards or names over shop doors in any but the German language. This is evaded by withholding all else except the surname of the individual, which is of course the same in both languages.

One instance more I give of the small annoyances to which the French residents of Mulhouse are subject, a trifling one, yet sufficient to irritate. Eight months after the annexation, orders were sent round to the pastors and clergy generally to offer up prayers for the Emperor William every Sunday. The order was obeyed, for refusal would have been assuredly followed by dismissal, but the prayer is ungraciously performed. The French pastors invoke the blessing of Heaven on "*l'Empereur qui nous gouverne.*" The pastors

who perform the service in German, pray not for "our Emperor," as is the apparently loyal fashion in the Fatherland, but for "the Emperor." These things are trifling grievances, but, on the other hand, the Prussians have theirs also. Not even the officials of highest rank are received into any kind of society whatever. Mulhouse possesses a charming zoological garden, free to subscribers only, who have to be balloted for. Twenty years after the annexation not a single Prussian has ever been able to obtain access to this garden.

Even the very poorest contrive to show their intense patriotism. It is the rule of the German government to give twenty-five marks to any poor woman giving birth to twins. The wife of a French workman during my sojourn at Mulhouse had three sons at a birth, but though in very poor circumstances, refused to claim the donation. "My sons shall never be Prussian," she said, "and that gift would make them so."

The real thorn in the flesh of the annexed Alsatians is, however, as I have before pointed out, military service, and the enforced German education. All who have read Alphonse Daudet's charming little story, *La dernière leçon de Français*, will be able to realize the painfulness of the truth, somewhat rudely brought home to

French parents. Their children must henceforth receive a German education, or none at all, for this is what the law amounts to in the great majority of cases. Rich people, of course, and those who are only well-to-do, can send their sons to the Lycée, opened at Belfort since the annexation, but the rest have to submit, or, by dint of great sacrifice, obtain private French teaching. And, whilst even Alsatians are quite ready to render justice to the forbearance and tact often shown by officials, an inquisitorial and prying system is pursued, as vexatious to the patriotic as enforced vaccination to the Peculiar People or school attendance to the poor. One lady was visited at seven o'clock in the morning by the functionary charged with the unpleasant mission of finding out where her boy was educated. "Tell those who sent you," said the indignant mother, "that my son shall never belong to you. We will give up our home, our prospects, everything; but our children shall never be Prussians." True enough, the family have since emigrated. No one who has not stayed in Alsace among Alsatians can realize the intense clinging to France among the people, nor the sacrifices made to retain their nationality. And it is well the true state of feeling throughout the annexed territory should be known outside its limits. With a considerable

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knowledge of French life and character, I confess I went to Mulhouse little prepared to find there a ferment of feeling which years have not sufficed to calm down.

"*Nous ne sommes pas heureux à Mulhouse,*" were almost the first words addressed to me by that veteran patriot and true philanthropist, Jean Dollfus.

And how could it be otherwise? M. Dollfus, as well as other representatives of the French subjects of Prussia in the Reichstag, had protested against the annexation of Alsace in vain. They pointed out the heavy cost to the German empire of these provinces, in consequence of the vast military force required to maintain them, the undying bitterness aroused, the moral, intellectual, and material interests at stake. I use the word intellectual advisedly, for, amongst other instances in point, I was assured that the book trade in Mulhouse had greatly declined since the annexation. The student class has diminished, many reading people have gone, and those who remain feel too uncertain about the future to accumulate libraries. Moreover, the ordeal that all have gone through has depressed intellectual as well as social life. Mulhouse has been too much saddened to recover herself as yet, although eminently a literary place, and a sociable one in the old happy French

days. The balls, soirées and reunions, that formerly made Mulhouse one of the friendliest as well as the busiest towns in the world, have almost ceased. People take their pleasures very soberly.

It is hardly possible to write of Mulhouse without consecrating a page or two to M. Jean Dollfus, a name already familiar to some English readers. The career of such a man forms part of contemporary history, and for sixty years the great cotton-printer of Mulhouse, the indefatigable philanthropist—the fellow-worker with Cobden, Arles-Dufour, and others in the cause of Free Trade—and the ardent patriot, had been before the world.

The year before my visit was celebrated, with a splendour that would be ridiculed in a novel, the diamond wedding of the head of the numerous house of Dollfus, the silver and the golden having been already kept in due form.

Mulhouse might well be proud of such a fête, for it was unique, and the first gala-day since the annexation. When M. Dollfus looked out of his window in the morning, he found the familiar street transformed as if by magic into a bright green avenue abundantly adorned with flowers. The change had been effected in the night by means of young fir-trees transplanted from the forest. The day was kept as a general holiday.

From an early hour the improvised avenue was thronged with visitors of all ranks bearing cards, letters of congratulation or flowers. The great Dollfus works were closed, and the five thousand workmen with their wives, children and superannuated parents, were not only feasted but enriched. After the banquet every man, woman and child received a present in money, the oldest and those who had remained longest in the employ of M. Dollfus being presented with forty francs. But the crowning sight of the day was the board spread for the Dollfus family and the gathering of the clan, as it may indeed be called. There was the head of the house, firm as a rock still, in spite of his eighty-two years; beside him the partner of sixty of those years, his devoted wife; next according to age, their numerous sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law; duly following came the grandsons and granddaughters, then the great-grandsons and great-granddaughters, and lastly, the babies of their fifth generation, all accompanied by their nurses in the picturesque costume of Alsace and Lorraine. This patriarchal assemblage numbered between one and two hundred guests. On the table were represented, in the artistic confectionery for which Mulhouse is famous, some of the leading events of M. Dollfus's busy life.

Here in sugar was a model of the achievement which will ever do honour to the name of Jean Dollfus, namely, the *cités ouvrières*, and what was no less a triumph of the confectioner's skill, a group representing the romantic ride of M. and Mme. Dollfus on camels towards the Algerian Sahara when visiting the African colony some twenty years before.

This patriarchal festival is said to have cost M. Dollfus half a million of francs, a bagatelle in a career devoted to giving! The bare conception of what this good man has bestowed takes one's breath away! Not that he was alone; never was a city more prolific of generous men than Mulhouse, but Jean Dollfus, "Le Père Jean," as he is called, stood at the head. He received with one hand to bestow with the other, and not only on behalf of the national, intellectual and spiritual wants of his own workmen and his own community—the Dollfus family are Protestant—but indiscriminately benefiting Protestant, Catholic, Jew; founding schools, hospitals, libraries, refuges, churches, for all.

We see at a glance after what fashion the great manufacturers set to work here to solve the problem before them. The life of ease and the life of toil are seen side by side, and all the brighter influences of the one brought to bear on

the other. The tall factory chimneys are unsightly here as elsewhere, and nothing can be uglier than the steam tramways, noisily running through the streets. But close to the factories and workshops are the cheerful villas and gardens of their owners, whilst near at hand the workmen's dwellings offer an exterior equally attractive. These *cités ouvrières* form indeed a suburb in themselves, and a very pleasant suburb too. Many middle-class families in England might be glad to own such a home, a semi-detached cottage or villa standing in a pretty garden with flowers and trees and plots of turf. Some of the cottages are models of trimness and taste, others of course are less well kept, a few have a neglected appearance. The general aspect, however, is one of thrift and prosperity, and it must be borne in mind that each dwelling and plot of ground are the property of the owner, gradually acquired by him out of his earnings, thanks to the initiative of M. Dollfus and his fellow-workers. "It is by such means as these that we have combated Socialism," said M. Dollfus to me; and the gradual transformation of the workman into an owner of property, is but one of the numerous efforts made at Mulhouse to lighten, in so far as is practicable, the burden of toil.

These pleasant avenues are very animated on Sundays, especially when a universal christening of babies is going on. The workmen at Mulhouse are paid once a fortnight, in some cases monthly, and it is usually after pay-day that such celebrations occur. We saw one Sunday afternoon quite a procession of carriages returning from the church to the *cité ouvrière*, for upon these occasions nobody goes on foot. There were certainly a dozen christening parties, all well dressed, and the babies in the finest white muslin and embroidery. A very large proportion of the artisans here are Catholics, and as one instance among others of the liberality prevailing here, I mention that one of the latest donations of M. Dollfus is the piece of ground, close to the *cité ouvrière*, on which now stands the new, florid Catholic church.

There are free libraries for all, and a very handsome museum has been opened within the last few years, containing some fine modern French pictures, all gifts of the Dollfuses, Engels, and Köchlins, to their native town. The museum, like everything else at Mulhouse, is as French as French can be, no German element visible anywhere. Conspicuous among the pictures are portraits of Thiers and Gambetta, and a fine subject of De Neuville, representing one

of those desperate battle-scenes of 1870–71 that still have such a painful hold on the minds of French people. It was withheld for some time, and had only been recently exhibited. The bombardment of Strasburg is also a popular subject in Mulhouse.

I have mentioned the flower-gardens of the city, but the real pleasure-ground of both rich and poor lies outside the suburbs, and a charming one it is, and full of animation on Sundays. This is the Tannenwald, a fine bit of forest on high ground above the vineyards and suburban gardens of the richer citizens. A garden is a necessity of existence here, and all who are without one in the town hire or purchase a plot of suburban ground. Here is also the beautiful subscription garden I have before alluded to, with fine views over the Rhine valley and the Black Forest.

Nor is Mulhouse without its excursions. Colmar and the romantic site of Notre Dame des Trois Épis may be visited in a day. Then there is Thann, with its perfect Gothic church, a veritable cathedral in miniature, and the charming, prosperous valley of Wesserling. From Thann the ascent of the Ballon d'Alsace may be made, but the place itself must on no account be missed. No more exquisite church in the region, and most

beautifully is it placed amid sloping green hills! It may be said to consist of nave and apse only. There are but two lateral chapels, evidently of a later period than the rest of the building. The interior is of great beauty, and no less so the façade and side porch, both very richly decorated. One's first feeling is of amazement to find such a church in such a place; but this dingy, sleepy little town was once of some importance and still does a good deal of trade. There is a very large Jewish community here, as in many other towns of Alsace. Whether they deserve their unpopularity is a painful question not lightly to be taken up.

Leisurely travellers bound homeward from Mulhouse will do well to diverge from the direct Paris line and join it at Dijon, by way of Belfort —the heroic city of Belfort, with its colossal lion, hewn out of the solid rock—the little Protestant town of Montbéliard, and Besançon. Belfort is well worth seeing, and the "Territoire de Belfort" is to all intents and purposes a new department, formed from that remnant of the Haut Rhin saved to France after the war of 1870–71. The "Territoire de Belfort" comprises upwards of sixty thousand hectares, and a population, chiefly industrial, of nearly seventy thousand inhabitants, spread over many communes and



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hamlets. There is a picturesque and romantic bit of country between Montbéliard and Besançon, well worth seeing, if only from the railway windows. But the tourist who wants to make no friendly calls on the way, whose chief aim is to get over the ground quickly, must avoid the *détour* by all means, as the trains are slow and the stoppages many.

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SKETCH BY GUSTAVE DORÉ, ÆTAT EIGHT YEARS

V

THE 'MARVELLOUS BOY' OF ALSACE

THE 'MARVELLOUS BOY' OF ALSACE

I

It is especially at Strasburg that travellers are reminded of another "marvellous boy," who, if he did not "perish in his pride," certainly shortened his days by overreaching ambition and the brooding bitterness waiting upon shattered hopes.

Gustave Doré was born and reared under the shadow of Strasburg Cathedral. The majestic spire, a world in itself, became indeed a world to this imaginative prodigy. He may be said to have learned the minster of minsters by heart, as before him Victor Hugo had familiarized himself with Notre Dame. The unbreeched artist of four summers never tired of scrutinizing the statues, monsters, gargoyles and other outer ornamentations, while the story of the pious architect Erwin and of his inspirer, Sabine, was equally dear. Never did genius more clearly exhibit the influence of early environment. True child of Alsace, he revelled in local folk-lore and legend. The eerie and the fantastic had the

same fascination for him as sacred story, and the lives of the saints, gnomes, elves, were-wolves and sorcerers bewitched no less than martyrs, miracle-workers and angels.

His play-hours would be spent within the precincts of the cathedral, whilst the long winter evenings were beguiled with fairy-tales and fables, his mother and nurse reading or reciting these, their little listener being always busy with pen or pencil. Something much more than mere precocity is shown in these almost infantine sketches. Exorbitant fancy is here much less striking than sureness of touch, outlined figures drawn between the age of five and ten displaying remarkable precision and point, each line of the silhouette telling. At six he celebrated his first school prize with an illustrated letter, two portraits and a mannikin surmounting the text.[1] His groups of peasants and portraits, made three or four years later, possess almost a Rembrandt strength, unfortunately passion for the grotesque and the fanciful often lending a touch of caricature. Downright ugliness must have had an especial charm for the future illustrator of the *Inferno*, his unconscious models sketched by the way being uncomely as the immortal Pickwick

[1] See his life by Blanch Roosevelt, Sampson Low & Co. 1885; also the French translation of the same, 1886.

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SKETCH BY GUSTAVE DORÉ, ÆTAT EIGHT YEARS

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and his fellows of Phiz. A devotee of Gothic art, he reproduced the mediæval monstrosities adorning cornice and pinnacle in human types. Equally devoted to nature out of doors, the same taste predominated. What he loved and sought was ever the savage, the legend-haunted, the ghoulish, seats and ambuscades of kelpie, hob-goblin, brownie and their kind.

From the nursery upwards, if the term can be applied to French children, his life was a succession of artistic abnormalities and *tours de force*. The bantling in petticoats who could astound his elders with wonderfully accurate silhouettes, continued to surprise them in other ways. His memory was no less amazing than his draughtsmanship. When seven years of age, he was taken to the opera and witnessed *Robert le Diable*. On returning home he accurately narrated every scene.

At eight he broke his right arm, but became as if by magic ambidextrous, whilst confined to bed, cheerily drawing all day long with the left hand. At ten he witnessed a grand public ceremony. In 1840 Strasburg celebrated the inauguration of a monument to Gutenberg, the festival being one of extraordinary splendour. Fifteen cars represented the industrial corporations of the city, each symbolically adorned, and in each riding

figures suitably travestied and occupied, men, women and children wearing the costumes of the period represented. Among the corporations figured the *Peintres-verriers*, or painters on stained glass, their car proving especially attractive to one small looker-on.

Intoxicated by the colour and movement of the fête, garlanded and beflagged streets, the symbolic carriages, the bands, civic and military, and the prevailing enthusiasm, the child determined to get up an apotheosis of his own: in other words, to repeat the performance on a smaller scale. Which he did. Cars, costumes, banners and decorations were all designed by this imp of ten. With the approval of his professors and the collaboration of his school-fellows, the Doré procession, consisting of four highly decorated cars, drawn by boys, defiled before the college authorities and made the round of the cathedral, the youthful impresario at its head. The car of the painters on glass was conspicuously elaborate, a star copied from a Cathedral window showing the superscription, *G. Doré, fecit.* Small wonder is it that the adoring mother of an equally adoring son should have believed in him from the first, and seen in these beginnings the dawn of genius, the advent, indeed, of a second Michael Angelo or Titian.

The more practical father might chide such overreaching vaticinations, might reiterate—

"Do not fill the boy's head with nonsense."

The answer would be—

"I know it. Our son is a genius."

And Doré *père* gave way, under circumstances curious enough.

II

In 1847 the family visited Paris, there to Gustave's delight spending four months. Loitering one day in the neighbourhood of the Bourse, his eye lighted upon comic papers with cuts published by MM. Auber and Philipon. Their shop windows were full of caricatures, and after a long and intent gaze the boy returned home, in two or three days presenting himself before the proprietors with half-a-dozen drawings much in the style of those witnessed. The benevolent but businesslike M. Philipon examined the sketches attentively, put several questions to his young visitor, and, finding that the step had been taken surreptitiously, immediately sat down and wrote to M. and Mme. Doré. He urged them with all the inducements he could command to allow their son the free choice of a career, assuring them of his future.

A few days later an agreement was signed by father and publisher to this effect: During three years the latter was to receive upon certain terms a weekly cartoon from the sixteen-year-old artist, who, on his side, bound himself to offer no sketches elsewhere.[1] Meanwhile, Gustave would pursue his studies at the Lycée Charlemagne, his patron promising to look after his health and well-being. The arrangement answered, and in *Le Journal pour rire* the weekly caricature signed by Doré soon noised his fame abroad. Ugly, even hideous, as were many of these caricatures, they did double duty, paying the lad's school expenses, and paving the way to better things. Of caricature Doré soon tired, and after this early period never returned to it. Is it any wonder that facile success and excessive laudation should turn the stripling's head? Professionally, if not artistically speaking, Doré passed straight from child to man; in one sense of the word he had no boyhood, the term tyro remained inapplicable. This undersized, fragile lad, looking years younger than he really was, soon found himself on what must have appeared a pinnacle of fame and fortune.

Shortly after his agreement with Philipon, his father died, and Mme. Doré with her family

[1] This document was reproduced in *Le Figaro* of December 4, 1848.

removed to Paris, settling in a picturesque and historic hôtel of the Rue St. Dominique. Here Doré lived for the rest of his too short life.

The house had belonged to the family of Saint Simon, that terrible observer under whose gaze even Louis XIV. is said to have quailed. So aver historians of the period. The associations of his home immediately quickened Doré's inventive faculties. He at once set to work and organized a brilliant set of *tableaux vivants*, illustrating scenes from the immortal Mémoires. The undertaking proved a great social success, and henceforth we hear of galas, soirées, theatricals and other entertainments increasing in splendour with the young artist's vogue—and means.

The history of the next twenty years reads like a page from the *Arabian Nights*. Although dazzling is the record from first to last, and despite the millions of francs earned during those two decades, the artist's ambition was never satisfied. We are always conscious of bitterness and disillusion. As an illustrator, no longer of cheap comic papers but of literary masterpieces brought out in costly fashion, Doré reached the first rank at twenty, his *Rabelais* setting the seal on his renown. So immense was the success of this truly colossal undertaking and of its successors, the *Don Quixote*, the *Contes de fées* of

Perrault and the rest, that he meditated nothing less than the illustration of cosmopolitan *chefs d'œuvre, en bloc*, a series which should include every great imaginative work of the Western world! Thus in 1855 we find him noting the following projects, to be carried out in ten years' time:—illustrations of Æschylus, Lucan, Ovid, Shakespeare, Goethe (*Faust*), Lamartine (*Méditations*), Racine, Corneille, Schiller, Boccaccio, Montaigne, Plutarch's Lives—these names among others. The jottings in question were written for a friend who had undertaken to write the artist's biography.

The *Rabelais*, *Don Quixote*, *The Inferno*, and several more of these sumptuous volumes were brought out in England. Forty years ago Doré's bold and richly imaginative work was in great favour here; indeed, throughout his life he was much more appreciated by ourselves than by his countrymen. All the drawings were done straight upon wood. Lavish in daily life, generous of the generous, Doré showed the same lavishness in his procedure. Some curious particulars are given upon this head. Fabulous sums were spent upon his blocks, even small ones costing as much as four pounds apiece. He must always have the very best wood, no matter the cost, and it was only the whitest, smoothest and glossiest box-wood that satisfied him. Enormous sums were

spent upon this material, and to his honour be it recorded, that no matter the destination of a block, the same cost, thought and minute manipulation were expended upon a trifling commission as upon one involving thousands of pounds. The penny paper was treated precisely the same as the volume to be brought out at two guineas. In the zenith of his fame as an illustrator, at a time when tip-top authors and editors were all clamouring for his drawings, he did not despise humbler admirers and clients. His delight in his work was only equalled by quite abnormal physical and mental powers. Sleep, food, fresh air, everything was forgotten in the engrossment of work. At this time he would often give himself three hours of sleep only.

Doré's ambition—rather, one of his ambitions—was to perfect wood engraving as an art, hence his indifference to the cost of production. Hence, doubtless, his persistence in drawing on wood without preliminary sketch or copy.

Perhaps such obsession was natural. How could he foresee the variety of new methods that were so soon to transform book illustration? Anyhow, herein partly lies the explanation of the following notice in a second-hand book catalogue, 1911—

"No. 355. Gustave Doré: *Dante's Inferno*, with 76 full-page illustrations by Doré. 4to,

gilt top, binding soiled, but otherwise good copy. 42*s.* for 3*s.* 6*d.* London, n.d."

A leading London publisher consulted by me on the subject, writes as follows—

"Doré's works are no longer in vogue. One of the reasons lies in the fact that his pictures were done by the old engraved process. He drew them straight on wood, and there are, accordingly, no original drawings to be reproduced by modern methods."

The words "fatal facility" cannot be applied to so consummate a draughtsman as the illustrator of Dante, Cervantes and Victor Hugo. But Doré's almost superhuman memory was no less of a pitfall than manual dexterity. The following story will partly explain his dislike of facsimile and duplication.

An intimate friend, named Bourdelin, relates how one day during the siege of Paris, the pair found themselves by the Courbevoie bridge. One side of this bridge was guarded by French gendarmes, the other by German officers, Prussians, Saxons, Bavarians, a dozen in all. For a quarter of an hour the two Frenchmen lingered, Doré intently gazing on the group opposite. On returning home some hours later he produced a sketch-book and in Bourdelin's presence swiftly outlined the twelve figures, exactly reproducing not only physiognomic divergences but every

detail of costume! Poor Doré! In those ardently patriotic days he entirely relied upon victory and drew an anticipatory picture of France triumphant, entitled, "Le Passage du Rhin." But the French never crossed the Rhine, and the drawing was given to this friend with the words: "My sketch has no longer any *raison d'être*. Keep it in memory of our fallacious hopes."

III

In an evil hour for his peace of mind and his fame, Doré decided to leave illustration and become a historic painter. He evidently regarded genius as a Pandora's gift, an all-embracing finality, an endowment that could neither be worsened nor bettered, being complete in itself.

A reader of Ariosto, he had not taken to heart one of his most memorable verses, those mellifluous lines in which the poet dwells upon the laboriousness of intellectual achievement. Nor when illustrating the *Arabian Nights* had the wonderful story of Hasan of El-Basrah evidently brought home to him the same moral.

Between a Doré and his object—so he deemed—existed neither "seven valleys nor seven seas, nor seven mountains of vast magnitude." A Doré needed no assistance of the flying Jinn and

the wandering stars on his way, no flying horse, "which when he went along flew, and when he flew the dust overtook him not."

Without the equipment of training, without recognition of such a handicap, he entered upon his new career.

In 1854 for the first time two pictures signed by Doré appeared on the walls of the Salon. But the canvases passed unnoticed. The Parisians would not take the would-be painter seriously, and the following year's experience proved hardly less disheartening. Of four pictures sent in, three were accepted, one of these being a historic subject, the other two being landscapes. The first, "La Bataille de l'Alma," evoked considerable criticism. The rural scenes were hung, as Edmond About expressed it, so high as to need a telescope.

Both About and Th. Gautier believed in their friend's newly-developed talent, but art-critics and the public held aloof. No medal was decreed by the jury, and, accustomed as he had been to triumph after triumph, his fondest hopes for the second time deceived, Doré grew bitter and acrimonious. That his failure had anything to do with the real question at issue, namely, his genius as a historic painter, he would never for a moment admit. Jealousy, cabals, prejudice only were accountable.

The half dozen years following were divided between delightfully gay and varied sociabilities, feverishly prolonged working hours and foreign travel. The millions of francs earned by his illustrations gave him everything he wanted but one, that one, in his eyes, worth all the rest.

Travel, a splendid studio, largesses—he was generosity itself—all these were within his reach. The craved-for renown remained ungraspable.

Even visits to his favourite resort, Barr, brought disenchantment. He found old acquaintances and the country folks generally wanting in appreciation. With greater and lesser men, he subacidly said to himself that a man was no prophet in his own country.

Ten years after the fiasco of his first canvases in the Salon came an invitation to England and the alluring project of a Doré gallery. The Doré Bible and Tennyson, with other works, had paved the way for a right royal reception. The streets of London, as he could well believe, were paved with gold. But many were the *contra*. "I feel the presentiment," he wrote to a friend, "that if I betake myself to England, I shall break with my own country and lose prestige and influence in France. I cannot exist without my friends, my habits and my *pot-au-feu*. Folks tell me that England is a land of fogs, that the sun never shines there, that the inhabitants are

cold, and that I should most likely suffer from sea-sickness in crossing the Manche. To sum up, England is a long way off, and I have a great mind to give up the project."

Friendly persuasion, self-interest, wounded self-love carried the day. Reluctantly he decided upon the redoubtable sea-voyage. Whether he suffered from sea-sickness or no we are not told. In any case the visit was repeated, John Bull according the great Alsatian, as he was called, what France had so persistently withheld.

Doré was here accorded the first rank among historic painters. His gallery in Bond Street became one of the London sights; in fashionable society, if not in the close ring of the great Victorian artists, he made a leading figure. Royalty patronized and welcomed him. The Queen bought one of his pictures ("Le Psalterion," now at Windsor), and invited him to Balmoral. The heir-apparent, the late King, admired his talent and relished his society. By the clerical world he was especially esteemed, being looked upon as a second Leonardo da Vinci. And, in fine, Doré must be regarded as an anticipator of the Entente cordiale. "Gustave Doré," his compatriots would say, "he is half an Englishman!" Forty years ago our popular favourite might indeed have believed in the fulfilment of his dream. The Thorwaldsen Gallery of Copen-

hagen had ever dazzled his imagination. Bond Street was not Paris, certainly, but in the greatest metropolis of the world his memory would be for ever perpetuated. Turning to the dithyrambic utterances of the London Press at the time we can hardly wonder at the hallucination.

Here are one or two passages culled from leading dailies and weeklies—

"In gravity and magnitude of purpose, no less than in the scope and power of his imagination, he towers like a Colossus among his contemporaries. Compared with such a work as 'Christ leaving the Prætorium,' the pictures in Burlington House look like the production of a race of dwarfs whose mental faculties are as diminutive as their stature. And it is not alone the efforts of the English School of Painting that appear puny in presence of so great and gigantic an undertaking; the work of all the existing schools of Europe sinks into equal insignificance, and we must go back to the Italian painters of the sixteenth century to find a picture worthy of being classed with this latest and most stupendous achievement of the great French master."

Elsewhere we read—

"The most marvellous picture of the present age is to be seen at 35, New Bond Street. The subject is 'Christ leaving the Prætorium.' The painter is the world-renowned Gustave Doré."

A journal devoted to art-criticism wrote—

"In 'The Christian Martyrs' we have a striking, thrilling and ennobling picture."

And so on, and so on. Yet at this time among "the dwarfs" of Burlington House then exhibiting was Millais, and contemporaneously with Doré in our midst, 1870–1, was Daubigny, whose tiniest canvases now fetch their thousands!

It was during Doré's apogee in England that a well-known French amateur, also visiting our shores, was thus addressed by an English friend: "Come with me to Bond Street, you will there see the work of your greatest living painter."

"*Our* greatest painter!" exclaimed the other. "You mean your own. Doré is our first draughtsman of France, yes, but painter, never, neither the greatest nor great; at least we were ignorant of the fact till informed of it by yourself and your country-people."

Doré knew well how matters stood, and bitterly resented the attitude of his own nation. Accorded a princely welcome across the Manche, his work worth its weight in gold on the other side of the Atlantic, in France he was looked at askance, even as a painter ignored. He regarded himself as shut out from his rightful heritage, and the victim, if not of a conspiracy, of a cabal. His school playmates and close friends, Taine,

Edmond About and Th. Gautier, might be on his side; perhaps, with reservations, Rossini and a few other eminent associates also. But the prescient, unerring verdict of the collective "man in the street"—

"The people's voice, the proof and echo of all human fame"—

he missed; resentment preyed upon his spirits, undermined his vitality, and doubtless had something to do with his premature breakdown.

The Doré gallery indeed proved his Capua, the long-stop to his fame.

IV

As a personality the would-be Titian, Dürer, Thorwaldsen and Benvenuto Cellini in one presents an engaging figure. His domestic life makes very pleasant reading. We find no dark holes and corners in the career of one who may be said to have remained a boy to the end, at fifty as at five full of freak and initiative, clingingly attached to a devoted and richly-endowed mother, and the ebullient spirit of a happy home. With his rapidly increasing fortune, the historic house in the Rue Dominique became an artistic, musical and dramatic centre. His fêtes were worthy of a millionaire, and, alike in those private theatricals,

tableaux vivants or concerts, he ever took a leading part. An accomplished violinist, Doré found in music a never-failing stimulant and refreshment. Rossini was one of his circle, among others were the two Gautiers, the two Dumas, Carolus Duran, Liszt, Gounod, Patti, Alboni and Nilsson, Mme. Doré, still handsome and alert in her old age, proudly doing the honours of what was now called the Hôtel Doré. By his literary and artistic brethren the many-faceted genius and exhilarating host was fully appreciated. Generosities he ever freely indulged in, the wealth of such rapid attainment being dispensed with an ungrudgeful hand. To works of charity the great illustrator gave largely, but we hear of no untoward misreckonings, nor bills drawn upon time, health or talents. With him, as with the average Frenchman, solvency was an eleventh commandment.

Meantime, as the years wore on, again and again he bid desperately for the suffrages withheld, his legitimately won renown held by him of small account. To his American biographer he said, on showing her some of his pictures: "I illustrate books in order to pay for my colours and paint-brushes. I was born a painter."

On the lady's companion, an American officer, naïvely asking if certain canvases were designed for London or Paris, he answered with bitter irony—

"Paris, forsooth! I do not paint well enough for Paris." As he spoke his face became clouded. The gay, jovial host of a few minutes before sighed deeply, and during their visit could not shake off depression.

Two crowning humiliations came before the one real sorrow of his life, the loss of that gifted mother who was alike his boon companion, closest confidante and enthusiastic Egeria. Perpetually seeking laurels in new fields, in 1877 he made his *début* as a sculptor. The marble group, "La Parque et l'Amour," signed G. Doré, won a *succès d'estime*, no more. In the following year was opened the great international exhibition on the Champ de Mars, Doré's enormous monumental vase being conspicuously placed over one of the porticoes. This astounding achievement in bronze, appropriately named the "Poème de la Vigne," created quite a sensation at the time. Reproductions appeared in papers of all countries containing a printing press or photographic machine. But for the artist's name, doubtless his work would have attained the gold medal and other honours. The Brobdingnagian vase, so wonderfully decorated with flowers, animals and arabesques, was passed over by the jury.

Equally mortifying was the fate of his marble group in the same year's Salon. This subject, "La Gloire," had a place of honour in the sculpture

gallery and won universal suffrages. The critics echoed popular approval. The jury remained passive. It was in the midst of these unnecessarily crushing defeats—for why, indeed, should any mortal have craved more than mortal success?—that Mme. Doré's forces gave way. From that time till her death, which occurred two years later, her son's place was by her side, floutings, projects, health and pleasure, forgotten, his entire thoughts being given to the invalid. No more beautiful picture of filial devotion could suggest itself to the painter of domestic subjects than this, Doré with table and sketching materials seated in his mother's sick-room, or at night ministering to her in wakeful moments. At dawn he would snatch a few hours' sleep, but that was all. No wonder that his own health should give way so soon after the death-blow of her loss.

"My friend," he wrote to an English boon companion, on March 16, 1881, "she is no more. I am alone. You are a clergyman, I entreat you to pray for the repose of her beloved soul and the preservation of my reason."

A few days later he wrote to the same friend of his "frightful solitude," adding his regret at not having anticipated such a blank and made for himself a home—in other words, taken a wife.

Some kind matchmaking friends set to work

and found, so at least they fancied, a bride exactly calculated to render him happy.

But on January 23, 1883, Doré died, prematurely aged and broken down by grief, corroding disappointment and quite frenzied overwork and ambition.

He never attained recognition as a historic painter among his country-folks. One canvas, however, "Tobit and the Angel," is placed in the Luxembourg, and his monument to Dumas ornaments the capital. His renown as an illustrator remains high as ever in France. And one, that one, the passionately desired prize of every Frenchman, became his: in 1861 he was decorated with the Red Ribbon. Six of Doré's great religious subjects retain their place in the Bond Street Gallery, but for reasons given above his wonderfully imaginative illustrations are here forgotten.

The superb edition of the *Enid* (Moxon, 1868), a folio bound in royal purple and gold, and printed on paper thick as vellum, the volume weighing four pounds, awakens melancholy reflections. What would have been poor Doré's feelings had he lived to see such a guinea's worth, and cheap at the price, gladly sold, rather got rid of, for three shillings!

Doré's last work, the unconventional monument to the elder Dumas, was left unfinished.

Completed by another hand, the group now forms a conspicuous object in the Avenue Villiers, Paris.

The striking figure of the great quadroon, with his short crisped locks, suggests a closer relationship to the race thus apostrophized by Walt Whitman—

"You, dim descended, black, divine souled African . . ."

He surmounts a lofty pedestal, on the base being seated a homely group, three working folks, a mob-capped woman reading a Dumas novel to two companions, evidently her father and husband, sons of the soil, drinking in every word, their attitude of the most complete absorption. Classicists and purists in art doubtless look askance at a work which would certainly have enchanted the sovereign romancer.

"Will folks read my stories when I am gone, doctor?" he asked as he lay a-dying. The good physician easily reassured his patient. "When we have patients awaiting some much-dreaded operation in hospital," he replied, "we have only to give them one of your novels. Straightway they forget everything else." And Dumas—"the great, the humane," as a charming poet has called him—died happy. As well he might, in so far as his fame was concerned. *La Tulipe Noire* would alone have assured his future.

VI

QUISSAC AND SAUVE

QUISSAC AND SAUVE

One should always go round the sun to meet the moon in France, that is to say, one should ever circumambulate, never make straight for the lodestar ahead. The way to almost any place of renown, natural, historic or artistic, is sure to teem with as much interest as that to which we are bound. So rich a palimpsest is French civilization, so varied is French scenery, so multifarious the points of view called up at every town, that hurry and scurry leave us hardly better informed than when we set out. Thus it has ever been my rule to indulge in the most preposterous peregrination, taking no account whatever of days, seasons or possible cons, hearkening only to the pros, and never so much as glancing at the calendar. Such protracted zigzaggeries have been made easy to the "devious traveller" by one unusual advantage. Just as pioneers in Australasia find Salvation Army shelters scattered throughout remotest regions, so, fortunately, have I ever been able to count upon "harbour and good company" during my thirty-five years of French sojourn and travel.

To reach a certain Pyrenean valley in which I was to spend a holiday would only have meant a night's dash by express from Paris. Instead, I followed the south-eastern route, halting at—Heaven knows how many!—already familiar and delightful places between Paris and Dijon, Dijon and Lyons, Lyons and Nîmes; from the latter city being bound for almost as many more before reaching my destination.

Quite naturally I would often find myself on the track of that "wise and honest traveller," so John Morley calls Arthur Young.

Half-way between Nîmes and Le Vigan lies the little town of Sauve, at which the Suffolk farmer halted in July 1787. "Pass six leagues of a disagreeable country," he wrote. "Vines and olives."

But why a disagreeable country? Beautiful I thought the landscape as I went over the same ground on a warm September afternoon a century and odd years later, on alighting to be greeted with a cheery—

"Here I am!"

As a rule I am entirely of Montaigne's opinion. "When I travel in Sicily," said the philosopher of Gascony, "it is not to find Gascons." Dearly as we love home and home-folk, the gist of travel lies in oppositeness and surprises. We do not

visit the uttermost ends of the globe in search of next-door neighbours. That cordial "Here I am!" however, had an unmistakable accent, just a delightful suspicion of French. My host was a gallant naval officer long since retired from service, with his English wife and two daughters, spending the long vacation in his country home.

High above the little village of Quissac rises the residence of beneficent owners, master and mistress, alas! long since gone to their rest. From its terrace the eye commands a vast and beautiful panorama, a richly cultivated plain dotted with villages and framed by the blue Cévennes. Tea served after English fashion and by a dear countrywoman, everywhere "*le confortable Anglais*," admittedly unattainable by French housewives, could not for a single moment make me forget that I was in France. And when the dinner gong sounded came the final, the unequivocal, proof of distance.

Imagine dining out of doors and in evening dress at eight o'clock in the last week of August! The table was set on the wide balcony of the upper floor, high above lawn and bosquets, the most chilly person having here nothing to fear. It is above all things the French climate that transports us so far from home and makes us

feel ourselves hundreds, nay, thousands of miles away.

I have elsewhere, perhaps ofttimes, dwelt on the luminosity of the atmosphere in southern and south-western France. To-night not a breath was stirring, the outer radiance was the radiance of stars only, yet so limpid, so lustrous the air that cloudless moonlight could hardly have made every object seem clearer, more distinct. The feeling inspired by such conditions is that of enchantment. For the nonce we may yield to a spell, fancy ourselves in Armida's enchanted garden or other "delightful land of Faëry."

Not for long, however! Pleasant practical matters soon recall us to the life of every day. That laborious, out-of-door existence, which seems sordid in superfine English eyes, but which is never without the gaiety that enchanted Goldsmith and Sterne a hundred and fifty years ago.

Whilst host and guest dined on the balcony, the farming folk and such of the household as could be spared were enjoying a starlit supper elsewhere. Later, my hostess took me downstairs and introduced her English visitor to a merry but strictly decorous party having a special bit of sward to themselves, bailiff, vintagers, stockmen, dairywoman, washerwoman and odd hands making up a round dozen of men, women

and boys. All seemed quite at home, and chatted easily with their employer and the visitor, by no means perturbed, rather pleased by the intrusion.

And here I will mention one of those incidents that lead English observers into so many misconceptions concerning French rural life. Little things that seem sordid, even brutifying to insular eyes, really arise from incompatible standards.

The Frenchman's ideal of material comfort begins and ends with solvency, the sense of absolute security from want in old age. Small comforts he sets little store by; provided that he gets a good dinner, lesser considerations go. I do not hesitate to say that the comforts enjoyed by our own farm-servants half a century ago were far in excess of those thought more than sufficient by French labourers and their employers. On the following day my hosts took me round the farmery, fowl-run, piggeries, neat-houses and stalls being inspected one by one. When we came to the last named, I noticed at the door of the long building and on a level with the feeding troughs for oxen, a bed-shaped wooden box piled up with fresh clean straw.

"That is where our stockman sleeps," explained the lady.

Here, then, quite contentedly slept the herdsman of a large estate in nineteenth-century

France, whilst his English compeers two generations before, and in much humbler employ, had their tidy bedroom and comfortable bed under the farmer's roof. What would my own Suffolk ploughmen have said to the notion of spending the night in an ox-stall? But *autres pays, autres mœurs*. In Déroulède's fine little poem, "Bon gîte," a famished, foot-sore soldier returning home is generously entreated by a poor housewife. When she sets about preparing a bed for him, he remonstrates—

> "Good dame, what means that new-made bed,
> Those sheets so finely spun?
> On heaped-up straw in cattle-shed,
> I'd snore till rise of sun."

The compensations for apparent hardship in the case of French peasants are many and great. In Henry James's great series of dissolving views called *The American Scene*, he describes the heterogeneous masses as having "a promoted look." The French proletariat have not a promoted look, rather one of inherited, traditional stability and self-respect. One and all, moreover, are promoting themselves, rising by a slow evolutionary process from the condition of wage-earner to that of metayer, tenant, lastly free-holder.

Although the immediate environs of Quissac

and Sauve are not remarkable, magnificent prospects are obtained a little farther afield—our drives and walks abounded in interest—and associations! Strange but true it is that we can hardly halt anywhere in France without coming upon historic, literary or artistic memorials. Every town and village is redolent of tradition, hardly a spot but is glorified by genius!

Thus, half-an-hour's drive from our village still stands the château and birthplace of Florian, the Pollux of fabulists, La Fontaine being the Castor, no other stars of similar magnitude shining in their especial arc.

Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian was born here in 1755, just sixty years after the great fabulist's death. Nephew of a marquis, himself nephew-in-law of Voltaire, endowed with native wit and gaiety, the young man was a welcome guest at Fernay, and no wonder! His enchanting fables did not see the light till after Voltaire's death, but we will hope that some of them had delighted his host in recitation. Many of us who loved French in early years have a warm corner in our hearts for "Numa Pompilius," but Florian will live as the second fabulist of France, to my own thinking twin of his forerunner.

How full of wisdom, wit and sparkle are these apologues! Take, for instance, the following,

which to the best of my ability I have rendered into our mother tongue—

VANITY (Le Petit Chien).

I

Once on a time and far away,
The elephant stood first in might,
He had by many a forest fray
At last usurped the lion's right.
On peace and reign unquestioned bent,
The ruler in his pride of place,
Forthwith to life-long banishment
Doomed members of the lion race.

II

Dispirited, their best laid low,
The vanquished could but yield to fate,
And turn their backs upon the foe
In silence nursing grief and hate.
A poodle neatly cropped and clipped,
With tasselled tail made leonine,
On hearing of the stern rescript,
Straightway set up a piteous whine.

III

"Alas!" he moaned. "Ah, woe is me!
Where, tyrant, shall I shelter find;
Advancing years what will they be,
My home and comforts left behind?"
A spaniel hastened at the cry,
"Come, mate, what's this to-do about?"
"Oh, oh," the other gulped reply,
"For exile we must all set out!"

IV

"Must all?" "No, you are safe, good friend;
The cruel law smites us alone;
Here undisturbed your days may end,
The lions must perforce begone."

"The lions? Brother, pray with these,
What part or lot have such as you?"
"What part, forsooth? You love to tease;
You know I am a lion too."[1]

Here is another, a poem of essential worldly wisdom, to be bracketed with Browning's equally oracular "The Statue and the Bust," fable and poem forming a compendium.

THE FLIGHTY PURPOSE
(Le Paysan and La Rivière).

"I now intend to change my ways"—
Thus Juan said—"No more for me
A round on round of idle days
'Mid soul-debasing company.
I've pleasure woo'd from year to year
As by a siren onward lured,
At last of roystering, once held dear,
I'm as a man of sickness cured.

"Unto the world I bid farewell,
My mind to retrospection give,
Remote as hermit in his cell,
For wisdom and wise friends I'll live."
"Is Thursday's worldling, Friday's sage?
Too good such news," I bantering spoke.
"How oft you've vowed to turn the page,
Each promise vanishing like smoke!

"And when the start?" "Next week—not this."
"Ah, you but play with words again."
"Nay, do not doubt me; hard it is
To break at once a life-long chain."

[1] The first translation appeared with others in *French Men, Women and Books*, 1910. The second was lately issued in the *Westminster Gazette*.

Came we unto the riverside,
Where motionless a rustic sate,
His gaze fixed on the flowing tide.
"Ho, mate, why thus so still and squat?"

"Good sirs, bound to yon town am I;
No bridge anear, I sit and sit
Until these waters have run dry,
So that afoot I get to it."
"A living parable behold,
My friend!" quoth I. "Upon the brim
You, too, will gaze until you're old,
But never boldly take a swim!"

As far as I know, no memorial has as yet been raised to the fabulist either at Quissac or at Sauve, but as long as the French language lasts successive generations will keep his memory green. Certain of his fables every little scholar knows by heart.

Associations of other kinds are come upon by travellers bound from Quissac to Le Vigan, that charming little centre of silkworm rearing described by me elsewhere. A few miles from our village lies Ganges, a name for ever famous in the annals of political economy and progress.

"From Ganges," wrote the great Suffolk farmer in July 1787, "to the mountain of rough ground which I crossed" (in the direction of Montdardier), "the ride has been the most interesting which I have taken in France; the efforts of industry the most vigorous, the animation the

most lively. An activity has been here that has swept away all difficulties before it and clothed the very rocks with verdure. It would be a disgrace to common sense to ask the cause; the enjoyment of property must have done it. *Give a man the sure possession of a bleak rock, and he will turn it into a garden.*" The italics are my own. When will Arthur Young have his tablet in Westminster Abbey, I wonder?

The department of the Gard offers an anomaly of the greatest historic interest. Here and here only throughout the length and breadth of France villages are found without a Catholic church, communities that have held fast to Protestantism and the right of private judgment from generation to generation during hundreds of years. Elsewhere, in the Côte d'Or, for instance, as I have described in a former work, Protestantism was completely stamped out by the Revocation, whole villages are now ultramontane, having abjured, the alternatives placed before them being confiscation of property, separation of children and parents, banishment, prison and death.[1]

The supremacy of the reformed faith may be gathered from the following facts: A few years back, of the six deputies representing this department five were Protestant and the sixth was a

[1] See *Friendly Faces*, chap. xvi.

Jew. The *Conseil Général* or provincial council numbered twenty-three Protestants as against seventeen Catholics. The seven members of the Board of Hospitals at Nîmes, three of the four inspectors of public health, nine of the twelve head-mistresses of girls' schools, twenty-nine of forty rural magistrates, were Protestants.

My host belonged to the same faith, as indeed do most of his class and the great captains of local industry. It is not as in Michelet's fondly-loved St. Georges de Didonne, where only the lowly and the toiler have kept the faith aflame.

But whilst neighbours now live peacefully side by side, a gulf still divides Catholic and Protestant. Although half a millennium has elapsed since the greatest crime of modern history, the two bodies remain apart: French *annexés* of Alsace-Lorraine and Germans are not more completely divided. Mixed marriages are of rarest occurrence, intercourse limited to the conventional and the obligatory. There are historic curses that defy lustration. St. Bartholomew is one of these. I must now say something about the country-folks. Calls upon our rustic neighbours, long chats with affable housewives, and rounds of farmery, vineyard and field attracted me more than the magnificent panoramas to be

obtained from Corconne and other villages within an easy drive.

George Sand has ever been regarded as a poetizer of rural life, an arch-idealist of her humbler country-folks. At Quissac I made more than one acquaintance that might have stepped out of *La petite Fadette* or *La mare au Diable.*

One old woman might have been "la paisible amie," the tranquil friend, to whom the novelist dedicated a novel. Neat, contented, active and self-respecting, she enjoyed a life-interest in two acres and a cottage, her live stock consisting of a goat, a pig and poultry, her invested capital government stock representing a hundred pounds. Meagre as may seem these resources, she was by no means to be pitied or inclined to pity herself, earning a few francs here and there by charing, selling her little crops, what eggs and chickens she could spare, above all things being perfectly independent.

A charming idyll the great Sand could have found here. The owner of a thirty-acre farm had lately died, leaving it with all he possessed to two adopted children, a young married couple who for years had acted respectively as steward and housekeeper. We are bound to infer that on the one hand there had been affection and gratitude, on the other the same qualities with

conscientiousness in business matters. The foster-father was childless and a widower, but, among the humble as well as the rich French, ambition of posthumous remembrance often actuates impersonal bequests. This worthy Jacques Bonhomme might have made an heir of his native village, leaving money for a new school-house or some other public edifice. Very frequently towns and even villages become legatees of the childless, and the worthy man would have been quite sure of a statue, a memorial tablet, or at least of having his name added to a street or square.

Before taking leave of Quissac I must mention one curious fact.

The Proteus of Odyssean story or the King's daughter and the Efreet in the "Second Royal Mendicant's Adventure," could not more easily transform themselves than the French peasant. Husbandman to-day, mechanic on the morrow, at one season he plies the pruning-hook, at another he turns the lathe. This adaptability of the French mind, strange to say, is nowhere seen to greater advantage than in out-of-the-way regions, just where are mental torpidity and unbendable routine. Not one of Millet's blue-bloused countrymen but masters a dozen handicrafts.

Thus, whilst the heraldic insignia of Sauve

should be a trident, those of Quissac should be surmounted by an old shoe! In the former place the forked branches of the *Celtis australis* or nettle tree, *Ulmaceæ*, afford a most profitable occupation. From its tripartite boughs are made yearly thousands upon thousands of the three-pronged forks used in agriculture. The wood, whilst very durable, is yielding, and lends itself to manipulation.

In Florian's birthplace folks make a good living out of old boots and shoes! Some native genius discovered that, however well worn foot-gear may be, valuable bits of leather may remain in the sole. These fragments are preserved, and from them boot heels are made; the *débris*, boots, shoes and slippers, no matter the material, find their way to the soil as manure. But this subject if pursued further would lead to a lane, metaphorically speaking, without a turning, that is to say to a treatise on French rural economy.

VII

AN IMMORTALIZER

AN IMMORTALIZER

In Renan's exquisitely phrased preface to his *Drames Philosophiques* occurs the following sentence which I render into English *tant bien que mal:* "Side by side are the history of fact and the history of the ideal, the latter materially speaking of what has never taken place, but which, in the ideal sense, has happened a thousand times."

Who when visiting the beautiful little town of Saumur thinks of the historic figures connected with its name? Even the grand personality of Duplessis Morny sinks into insignificance by comparison with that of the miser's daughter, the gentle, ill-starred Eugénie Grandet! And who when Carcassonne first breaks upon his view thinks of aught but Nadaud's immortal peasant and his plaint—

"I'm growing old, just three score year,
In wet and dry, in dust and mire,
I've sweated, never getting near
Fulfilment of my heart's desire.
Ah, well I see that bliss below
'Tis Heaven's will to vouchsafe none,
Harvest and vintage come and go,
I've never got to Carcassonne!"

The tragi-comic poem of six eight-lined verses ending thus—

"So sighed a peasant of Limoux,
A worthy neighbour bent and worn.
'Ho, friend,' quoth I, 'I'll go with you.
We'll sally forth to-morrow morn.'
And true enough away we hied,
But when our goal was almost won,
God rest his soul!—the good man died,
He never got to Carcassonne!"

No lover of France certainly should die without having seen Carcassonne, foremost of what I will call the pictorial Quadrilateral, no formidable array after the manner of their Austrian cognominal, but lovely, dreamlike things. These four walled-in towns or citadels, perfect as when they represented mediæval defence, are Carcassonne, Provins in the Brie, Semur in upper Burgundy, and the Breton Guérande, scene of Balzac's *Béatrix*. To my thinking, and I have visited each, there is little to choose between the first two, but exquisite as is the little Briard acropolis, those imaginary "topless towers of Ilium" of Nadaud's peasant bear the palm. That first view of Carcassonne as we approach it in the railway of itself repays a long and tedious journey. A vision rather than reality, structure of pearly clouds in mid-heaven, seems that opaline pile lightly touched with gold. We

expect it to evaporate at evenfall! Vanish it does not, nor wholly bring disillusion, so fair and harmonious are the vistas caught in one circuit of the citadel, mere matter of twenty minutes.

But the place by this time has become so familiar to travellers in France and readers of French travel, that I will here confine myself to its glorifier, author of a song that has toured the world.

The first biography of the French Tom Moore, published last year, gives no history of this much translated poem.[1] Had, indeed, some worthy vine-grower poured out such a plaint in the poet's ears? Very probably, for one and all of Nadaud's rural poems breathe the very essence of the fields, the inmost nature of the peasant, from first to last they reveal Jacques Bonhomme to us, his conceptions of life, his mentality and limitations.

Nadaud's career is uneventful, but from one point of view, far from being noteless, he was pre-eminently the happy man. His biographer (A. Varloy) tells us of a smooth, much relished, even an exuberant existence. The son of an excellent bourgeois, whose ancestry, nevertheless, like that of many another, could be traced for

[1] My own rendering of this piece and many other of Nadaud's songs and ballads are given in *French Men, Women and Books*, 1910. American translators have admirably translated *Carcassonne*.

six hundred years, his early surroundings were the least lyric imaginable.

He was born at Roubaix, the flourishing seat of manufacture near Lille, which, although a mere *chef-lieu du canton*, does more business with the Bank of France than the big cities of Toulouse, Nîmes, Montpellier and others thrice its size. Dress fabrics, cloths and exquisite napery are the products of Roubaix and its suburb; vainly, however, does any uncommercial traveller endeavour to see the weavers at work. Grimy walls and crowded factory chimneys are relieved at Roubaix by gardens public and private, and the town is endowed with museums, libraries, art and technical schools. But Nadaud, like Cyrano de Bergerac, if asked what gave him most delectation, would certainly have replied—

> "Lorsque j'ai fait un vers et que je l'aime,
> Je me paye en me le chantant à moi-même."

Here is the boy's daily programme when a twelve-year-old student at the Collège Rollin, Paris. The marvel is that the poetic instinct survived such routine, marvellous also the fact that the dry-as-dust in authority was a well-known translator of Walter Scott. If anything could have conjured the Wizard of the North from his grave it was surely these particulars written by

Gustave Nadaud to his father on the 19th of October, 1833—

"Five-thirty, rise; five-forty-five, studies till seven-thirty; breakfast and recreation from seven-thirty till eight; from eight till ten, school; from ten to a quarter past, recreation; from a quarter past ten till half past twelve, school; then dinner and recreation from one till two. School from two till half past four; collation from half past four till a quarter past five; school from a quarter past five till eight. Supper and to bed."

Poetry here was, however, a healthy plant, and in his school-days this born song-writer would scribble verses on his copy-books and read Racine for his own amusement. Turning his back upon the mill-wheels of his native town and an assured future in a Parisian business house, like Gil Blas's friend, *il s'est jeté dans le bel esprit*—in other words, he betook himself to the career of a troubadour. Never, surely, did master of song-craft write and sing so many ditties!

Quitting school with a tip-top certificate both as to conduct and application, Gustave Nadaud quickly won fame if not fortune. Hardly of age, he wrote somewhat Bohemian effusions that at once made the round of Parisian music-halls.

The revolution, if it brought topsy-turvydom in politics, like its great forerunner '89 brought

the apogee of song. The popular young lyrist, ballader and minstrel, for Nadaud accompanied himself on the piano, now made a curious compact, agreeing to write songs for twenty years, a firm named Heugel paying him six thousand francs yearly by way of remuneration.

Two hundred and forty pounds a year should seem enough for a young man, a bachelor brought up in bourgeois simplicity. But the cost of living in Paris was apparently as high sixty years ago as now. In 1856–7 he wrote to a friend: "How upon such an income I contrived to live and frequent Parisian salons without ever asking a farthing of any one, only those who have been poor can tell." The salons spoken of were not only aristocratic but Imperial, the late Princess Mathilde being an enthusiastic hostess and patroness. Several operettas were composed by Nadaud for her receptions and philanthropic entertainments. Here is a sketch of the French Tom Moore in 1868 by a witty contributor of the *Figaro*—

"Nadaud then seated himself at the piano, and of the words he sang I give you full measure, the impression produced by his performance I cannot hope to convey. Quite indescribable was the concord of voice and hands, on the music as on wings each syllable being lightly borne, yet

its meaning thereby intensified. In one's memory only can such delight be revived and reproduced."

With other poets, artists and musicians Nadaud cast vocation to the winds in 1870–1, working in field and other hospitals. "I did my best to act the part of a poor little sister of charity," he wrote to a friend. His patriotic poem, "La grande blessée," was written during that terrible apprenticeship.

With Nadaud henceforward it was a case of roses, roses all the way. Existence he had ever taken easily, warm friendships doing duty for a domestic circle. And did he not write—

"I dreamed of an ideal love
And Benedick remain?"

His songs proved a mine of wealth, and the sumptuously illustrated edition got up by friends and admirers brought him 80,000 francs, with which he purchased a villa, christened Carcassonne, at Nice, therein spending sunny and sunny-tempered days and dispensing large-hearted hospitality. To luckless brethren of the lyre he held out an ungrudgeful hand, alas! meeting with scant return. The one bitterness of his life, indeed, was due to ingratitude. Among his papers after death was found the following note—

"Throughout the last thirty years I have lent

sums, large considering my means, to friends, comrades and entire strangers. Never, never, never has a single centime been repaid by a single one of these borrowers. I now vow to myself, never under any circumstances whatever to lend money again!"

Poor song-writers, nevertheless, he posthumously befriended. By his will with the bulk of his property was founded "La petite Caisse des chansonniers," a benefit society for less happy Nadauds to come. By aid of these funds, lyrists and ballad-writers unable to find publishers would be held on their onward path. Full of honours, Nadaud died in 1893, monuments being erected to his memory, streets named after him, and undiminished popularity keeping his name alive.

And the honour denied to Béranger, to Victor Hugo, to Balzac, the coveted sword and braided coat of the Forty were Nadaud's also. With the witty Piron he could not ironically anticipate his own epitaph thus—

"Here lies Nadaud who was nothing, not even an Academician!"

Before taking leave of Carcassonne, poetic and picturesque, the most inveterate anti-sightseer should peep into its museum. For this little *chef-lieu* of the Aude, with a population under thirty thousand, possesses what, indeed, hardly a

French townling lacks, namely, a picture-gallery. If not remarkable from an artistic point of view, the collection serves to demonstrate the persistent, self-denying and constant devotion to culture in France. Times may be peaceful or stormy, seasons may prove disastrous, the withered, thin and blasted ears of corn may devour the seven ears full and golden, the ship of State may be caught in a tornado and lurch alarmingly—all the same "the man in the street," "the rascal many," to quote Spenser, will have a museum in which, with wife and hopefuls, to spend their Sunday afternoons. The local museum is no less of a necessity to Jacques Bonhomme than his daily *pot-au-feu*, that dish of soup which, according to Michelet, engenders the national amiability.

The splendid public library—the determinative is used in the sense of comparison—numbers just upon a volume per head, and the art school, school of music, and other institutions tell the same story. Culture throughout the country seems indigenous, to spread of itself, and, above all things, to reach all classes. Culture on French soil is gratuitous, ever free as air! We must never overlook that primary fact.

One or two more noticeable facts about Carcassonne. Here was born that eccentric revolu-

tionary and poetic genius, Fabre d'Eglantine, of whom I have written elsewhere.[1]

Yet another historic note. From St. Vincent's tower during the Convention, 1792–5, were taken those measurements, the outcome of which was the metric system. Two mathematicians, by name Delambre and Méchain, were charged with the necessary calculations, the *mètre*, or a ten-millionth part of the distance between the poles and the equator (3·2808 English feet), being made the unit of length. Uniformity of weight followed, and became law in 1799.

But to touch upon historic Carcassonne is to glance upon an almost interminable perspective. The chronicle of this charming little city on the bright blue Aude has been penned and re-penned in blood and tears. In 1560 Carcassonne suffered a preliminary Saint Bartholomew, a general massacre of Protestants announcing the evil days to follow; days that after five hundred years have left their trace, moral as well as material.

[1] See *Literary Rambles in France*, 1906.

VIII

TOULOUSE

TOULOUSE

A ZIGZAGGERY, indeed, was this journey from Nîmes to my Pyrenean valley. That metropolis of art and most heroic town, Montauban, I could not on any account miss. Toulouse necessarily had to be taken on the way to Ingres-ville, as I feel inclined to call the great painter's birthplace and apotheosis. But why write of Toulouse? The magnificent city, its public gardens, churches, superbly housed museums and art galleries, its promenades, drives and panoramas are all particularized by Murray, Joanne and Baedeker. Here, however, as elsewhere, are one or two features which do not come within the province of a guide-book.

The only city throughout France that welcomed the Inquisition was among the first to open a *Lycée pour jeunes filles*. In accordance with the acts of 1880–82 public day schools for girls were opened throughout France; that of Toulouse being fairly representative, I will describe my visit.

The school was now closed for the long vacation, but a junior mistress in temporary charge gave us friendliest welcome, and showed us over

the building and annexes. She evidently took immense and quite natural pride in the little world within world of which she formed a part. Her only regret was that we could not see the scholars at work. Here may be noted the wide field thrown open to educated women by the above-named acts, from under-mistresses to *Madame la directrice*, the position being one of dignity and provision for life, pensions being the reward of long service.

The course of study is prepared by the rector of the Toulousain Academy, and the rules of management by the municipal council, thus the programme of instruction bears the signature of the former, whilst the prospectus, dealing with fees, practical details, is signed by the mayor in the name of the latter.

We find a decree passed by the town council in 1887 to the effect that in the case of two sisters a fourth of the sum-total of fees should be remitted, of three, a half, of four, three-quarters, and of five, the entire amount. Even the outfit of the boarders must be approved by the same authority. A neat costume is obligatory, and the number and material of undergarments is specified with the utmost minuteness. Besides a sufficient quantity of suitable clothes, each student must bring three pairs of boots, thirty

pocket-handkerchiefs, a bonnet-box, umbrella, parasol, and so forth.

Such regulations may at first sight look trivial and unnecessary, but there is much to be said on the other side. From the beginning of the term to the end, the matron, whose province is quite apart from that of the head-mistress, is never worried about the pupils' dress, no shoes in need of repair, no garments to be mended, no letters to be written begging Mme. A. to send her daughter a warm petticoat, Mme. B. to forward a hair-brush, and so on. Again, the uniform obligatory on boarders prevents those petty jealousies and rivalries provoked by fine clothes in girls' schools. Alike the child of the millionaire and of the small official wear the same simple dress.

Children are admitted to the lower school between the ages of five and twelve, the classes being in the hands of certificated mistresses. The upper school, at which pupils are received from twelve years and upwards, and are expected to remain five years, offers a complete course of study, lady teachers being aided by professors of the Faculté des Lettres and of the Lycée for youths. Students who have remained throughout the entire period, and have satisfactorily passed final examinations, receive a certificate entitling

them to admission into the great training college of Sèvres or to offer themselves as teachers in schools and families.

The curriculum is certainly modest compared with that obligatory on candidates for London University, Girton College, or our senior local examination; but it is an enormous improvement on the old conventual system, and several points are worthy of imitation. Thus a girl quitting the Lycée would have attained, first and foremost, a thorough knowledge of her own language and its literature; she would also possess a fair notion of French common law, of domestic economy, including needlework of the more useful kind, the cutting out and making up of clothes, and the like. Gymnastics are practised daily. In the matter of religion the municipality of Toulouse shows absolute impartiality. No sectarian teaching enters into the programme, but Catholics and Protestants and Jews in residence can receive instruction from their respective ministers.

The Lycée competes formidably with the convents as regards fees. Twenty-eight pounds yearly cover the expense of board, education, and medical attendance at the upper school; twenty-four at the lower; day boarders pay from twelve to fifteen pounds a year; books, the use of the school omnibus, and laundress being extras.

Three hundred scholars in all attended during the scholastic year ending July 1891.

Day-pupils not using the school omnibus must be accompanied to and from the school, and here an interesting point is to be touched upon. In so far as was practicable, the Lycée for girls has been modelled on the plan of the time-honoured establishments for boys. As yet a uniform curriculum to begin with was out of the question; the programme is already too ambitious in the eyes of many, whilst ardent advocates of the higher education of women in France regret that the vices as well as the virtues of the existing system have been retained. Educationists and advanced thinkers generally would fain see a less strait-laced routine, a less stringent supervision, more freedom for play of character. The Lycée student, boy or girl, youth or maiden, is as strictly guarded as a criminal; not for a moment are these citizens of the future trusted to themselves.

In the vast dormitory of the high school here we see thirty neat compartments with partitions between, containing bed and toilet requisites, and at the extreme end of the room, commanding a view of the rest, is the bed of the under-mistress in charge, *surveillante* as she is called. Sleeping or waking, the students are watched. This

massing together of numbers and perpetual supervision no longer find universal favour.

But I am here writing of fifteen years ago. Doubtless were I to repeat my visit I should find progressive changes too numerous for detail. Happy little middle-class Parisians now run to and from their Lycées unattended. Young ladies in society imitate their Anglo-Saxon sisters and have shaken off that incubus, *la promeneuse* or walking chaperon.

Works on social France, as is the case with almanacs, encyclopædias and the rest, require yearly revision. Manners and customs change no less quickly than headgear and skirts.

Charles Lamb would have lived ecstatically at the Languedocian capital. It is a metropolis of beggardom, a medicant's Mecca, a citadel of Jules Richepin's cherished *Gueux*. Here, indeed, Elia need not have lamented over the decay of beggars, "the all sweeping besom of societarian reformation—your only modern Alcides' club to rid time of its abuses—is uplift with many-handed sway to extirpate the last fluttering tatters of the bugbear *Mendicity*. Scrips, wallets, bags, staves, dogs and crutches, the whole mendicant fraternity with all their baggage are fast hasting out of the purlieus of this eleventh persecution."

No, here is what the best beloved of English

humorists calls "the oldest and the honourablest form of pauperism," here his vision would have feasted on "Rags, the Beggars' robes and graceful insignia of his profession, his tenure, his full dress, the suit in which he is expected to show himself in public." "He is never out of fashion," adds Lamb, "or limpeth outwardly behind it. He is not required to wear court mourning. He weareth all colours, fearing none. His costume hath undergone less change than the Quaker's. He is the only man in the universe who is not obliged to study appearances."

Here, too, would the unmatchable writer have gazed upon more than one "grand fragment, as good as an Elgin marble." And alas! many deformities more terrible still, and which, perhaps, would have damped even Lamb's ardour. For in the Toulouse of 1894, as in the London of sixty years before, its mendicants "were so many of its sights, its Lions." The city literally swarmed with beggars. At every turn we came upon some living torso, distorted limb and hideous sore. Begging seemed to be the accepted livelihood of cripples, blind folk and the infirm. Let us hope that by this time something better has been devised for them all. Was it here that Richepin partly studied the mendicant fraternity, giving us in poetry his astounding appreciation,

psychological and linguistic? And perhaps the bard of the beggars, like the English humorist, would wish his *pauvres Gueux* to be left unmolested.

The sights of Toulouse would occupy a conscientious traveller many days. The least leisurely should find time to visit the tiny square called *place du Salin.* Here took place the innumerable *autos-da-fé* of the Toulousain Inquisition, and here, so late as 1618, the celebrated physician and scientist Vanini was atrociously done to death by that truly infernal tribunal, and for what? For simply differing from the obscurantism of his age, and having opinions of his own.

The atrocious sentence passed on Vanini was in part remitted, evidently public opinion already making itself felt. His tongue was cut out, but strangulation preceded the burning alive. Here one cannot help noting the illogical, the puerile—if such words are applicable to devilish wickedness—aspect of such Inquisitorial sentences. If these hounders-down of common-sense and the reasoning faculty really believed, as they affected to believe, that men who possessed and exercised both qualities were thereby doomed to eternal torments, why set up the horrible and costly paraphernalia of the Inquisition? After all, no

matter how ingeniously inventive might be their persecutors, they could only be made to endure terminable and comparatively insignificant torments, not a millionth millionth fraction of eternity!

Refreshing it is to turn to the Toulouse of minstrelsy. The proud seat of the troubadours, the Academy of the Gay Science and of the poetic tourneys revived in our own day! Mistral's name has long been European, and other English writers have charmingly described the *Feux Floraux* of the olden time and the society of *Lou Felibrige* with its revival of Provençal literature. But forty years ago, and twenty years before his masterpiece had found a translator here, he was known and highly esteemed by a great Englishman.

In Mill's *Correspondence* (1910) we find a beautiful letter, and written in fine stately French, from the philosopher to the poet, dated Avignon, October 1869.

Mill had sent Mistral the French translation of his essay, "The Subjection of Women," and in answer to the other's thanks and flattering assurance of his own conversion, he wrote: "Parmi toutes les adhésions qui ont été données à la thèse de mon petit livre, je ne sais s'il y en a aucune qui m'ont fait plus de plaisir que la vôtre."

The letter as a whole is most interesting, and ends with a characterization, a strikingly beautiful passage in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Hard were it to match this appreciation among orthodox writers.

So transparent is the atmosphere here that the Pyrenees appear within an hour's ride: they are in reality sixty miles off! Lovely are the clearly outlined forms, flecked with light and shadow, the snowy patches being perfectly distinct.

IX

MONTAUBAN, OR INGRES-VILLE

MONTAUBAN, OR INGRES-VILLE

An hour by rail from Toulouse lies the ancient city of Montauban, as far as I know unnoticed by English tourists since Arthur Young's time. This superbly placed *chef-lieu* of the Tarn and Garonne is alike an artistic shrine and a palladium of religious liberty. Here was born that strongly individualized and much contested genius, Dominique Ingres, and here Protestantism withstood the League, De Luyne's besieging army and the dragonnades of Louis XIV.

The city of Ingres may be thought of by itself; there is plenty of food for reflection here without recalling the prude whose virtue caused more mischief than the vices of all the Montespans and Dubarrys put together. Let us forget the Maintenon terror at Montauban, the breaking up of families, the sending to the galleys of good men and women, the torturings, the roastings alive, and turn to the delightful and soothing souvenirs of genius! Every French town that has given birth to shining talent is straightway turned into a Walhalla. This ancient town, so strikingly placed, breathes of Ingres, attracts the

traveller by the magic of the painter's name, has become an art pilgrimage. The noble monument erected by the townsfolk to their great citizen and the picture-gallery he bequeathed his native city well repay a much longer journey than that from Toulouse. We see here to what high levels public spirit and local munificence can rise in France. We see also how close, after all, are the ties that knit Frenchman and Frenchman, how the glory of one is made the pride of all. The bronze statue of the painter, with the vast and costly bas-relief imitating his "Apotheosis of Homer" in the Louvre, stand in the public walk, the beauty of which aroused even Arthur Young's enthusiasm. "The promenade," he wrote in June 1787, "is finely situated. Built on the highest part of the rampart, and commanding that noble vale, or rather plain, one of the richest in Europe, which extends on one side to the sea and in front to the Pyrenees, whose towering masses heaped one upon another in a stupendous manner, and covered with snow, offer a variety of lights and shades from indented forms and the immensity of their projections. This prospect, which contains a semicircle of a hundred miles in diameter, has an oceanic vastness in which the eye loses itself; an almost boundless scene of cultivation; an animated but confused mass of infinitely varied

parts, melting gradually into the distant obscure, from which emerges the amazing frame of the Pyrenees, rearing their silvered heads above the clouds."

The Ingres Museum contains, I should say, more works from the hand of a single master than were ever before collected under the same roof. Upwards of a thousand sketches, many of great power and beauty, are here, besides several portraits and one masterpiece, the Christ in the Temple, brilliant as a canvas of Holman Hunt, although the work of an octogenarian. The painter's easel, palette, and brushes, his violin, the golden laurel-wreath presented to him by his native town, and other relics are reverently gazed at on Sundays by artisans, soldiers and peasant-folk. The local museum in France is something more than a little centre of culture, a place in which to breathe beauty and delight. It is a school of the moral sense, of the nobler passions, and also a temple of fame. Therein the young are taught to revere excellence, and here the ambitious are stimulated by worthy achievement.

Ingres-ville recalls an existence stormy as the history of Montauban itself. This stronghold of reform throughout her vicissitudes did not show a bolder, more determined front to the foe than did her great citizen his own enemies and

detractors. Dominique Ingres and his life-story favour those physicists who discern in native soil and surroundings the formative influences of aptitudes and character. The man and his birthplace matched each other. Indomitableness characterized both, and to understand both we must know something of their respective histories. To Montauban Henri Martin's great history does ample justice, to her illustrious son contemporary writers have recently paid worthy tributes.[1]

"When a writer is praised above his merits in his own times," wrote Savage Landor, "he is certain of being estimated below them in the times succeeding." In the case of Ingres, opposition and contumely were followed by perhaps excessive laudation whilst he lived, after his death ensuing a long period of reaction. Time has now set the seal upon his fame. The great Montalbanais has been finally received into the national Walhalla.

The father of the so-called French Raphaël, writes his biographer, was not even a Giovanni Santi. Joseph Ingres, in the words of M. Momméja, was *un petit ornemaniste*, a fabricator of knick-knacks, turning out models in clay, busts in

[1] See *Les Grands Artistes—Ingres*, par J. Momméja, Paris, Laurens; *Le Roman d'amour de M. Ingres*, par H. Lapauze, Paris, Lafitte, 1911.

plaster, miniatures and other trifles for sale at country fairs. Who can say, this humble craftsman may yet have had much to do with his son's aspirations?

An inferior artist can appraise his masters. From the humble artificer and purveyor of bagatelles the youth not only imbibed a passion for art and technical knowledge: he inherited the next best thing to a calling, in other words, a love of music. From the palette throughout his long life Ingres would turn with never-abated enthusiasm to his adored violin.

The learned monograph above-named gives a succinct and judicial account of the painter's career. The second writer mentioned tells the story of his inner life; one, indeed, of perpetual and universal interest.

For to this sturdy young bourgeois early came a crisis. He found himself suddenly at the parting of the ways, on the one hand beckoning Conscience, on the other ambition in the flattering shape of Destiny. To which voice would he hearken? Would love and plighted troth overrule that insistent siren song, Vocation? Would he yield, as have done thousands of well-intentioned men and women before him, to self-interest and worldly wisdom? The problem to be solved by this brilliantly endowed artist just

twenty-six—how many a historic parallel does it recall! What three words can convey so much pathos, heroism and generosity as "il gran riffiuto?"—the great renunciation. Does the French language contain a more touching record than that of the great Navarre's farewell to his Huguenot brethren? What bitter tears shed Jeanne d'Albret's son ere he could bring himself to sacrifice conscience on the altar of expediency and a great career!

At the age of twenty we find Dominique Ingres studying in Paris under David, then in his apogee.

The son of an obscure provincial, however promising, would hardly be overwhelmed with hospitalities; all the more welcome came the friendliness of an honourable magistrate and his wife, by name Forestier. During five years the young man had lived on terms of closest intimacy with these good folks, under his eyes growing up their only daughter.

Alas! poor Julie. Mighty, says Goethe, is the god of propinquity. On Dominique's part attachment seems to have come insensibly, as a matter of course and despite the precariousness of his position. M. Forestier encouraged the young man's advances. To Julie love for the brilliant winner of the Prix de Rome became an absorp-

tion, her very life. Not particularly endowed by Nature—we have her portrait in M. Momméja's volume—she described her own physiognomy as "not at all remarkable, but expressive of candour and goodness of heart." For Julie, as we shall see, turned her love-story into a little novel, only unearthed the other day by M. Lapauze.

The Prix de Rome meant, of course, a call to Rome, the worthy magistrate exacting from his prospective son-in-law a promise that in twelve months' time he would return. During that interval correspondence went on apace not only between the affianced lovers, but between M. Forestier and Ingres, the former taking affectionate and not uncritical interest in the other's projects. For Ingres was before all things a projector, anticipating by decades the achievements of his later years. The glow of enthusiasm, the fever of creativeness were at its height. Italy possessed Ingres' entire being when the crisis came.

After delays, excuses, pleadings, Julie's father lost patience. He would brook no further tergiversations. Ingres must choose between Italy and Paris; in other words, so the artist interpreted it, between art and marriage, a proud destiny or self-extinction.

Never had a young artist more completely

fallen under the spell of Italy. The recall seemed a death-blow. "On my knees," he wrote to Julie, whom he really loved, "I implore you not to ask this. It is impossible for me to quit immediately a land so full of marvel."

But the practical M. Forestier would not give way. Ingres' persistence looked like folly, even madness in his eyes. The young man was with difficulty living from hand to mouth, portraits and small orders barely keeping the wolf from the door. The return home and marriage would ensure his future materially and socially, and up to a certain point render him independent of malevolent criticism. For already Ingres was fiercely attacked by Parisian authorities on art: he had become important enough to be a target. After cruellest heart-searching and prolonged self-reproach, *il gran rifiuto* was made, youthful passion, worldly advantages—and plighted faith —were cast to the winds. Henceforth he would live for his palette only, defying poverty, detraction and fiercely antagonistic opinion; if failing in allegiance to others, at least remaining staunch to his first, best, highest self, his genius.

Julie, the third imperishable Julie of French romance, never married. Let us hope that the writing of her artless little autobiography called a novel brought consolation. Did she ever

forgive the recalcitrant? Her story, *Emma, ou la fiancée*, ends with the aphorism: "Without the scrupulous fulfilment of the given word, there can be neither happiness nor inner peace."

Did that backsliding in early life disturb the great painter's stormy but dazzling career? Who can say? We learn that Ingres was twice, and, according to accredited reports, happily, married. His first wife, a humbly-born maiden from his native province, died in 1849, leaving the septuagenarian so desolate, helpless and stricken that kindly interveners set to work and re-married him. The second Mme. Ingres, although thirty years his junior, gave him, his biographer tells us, "that domestic peace and happiness of which for a brief space he had been deprived." Heaped with honours, named by Napoleon III. Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour, Senator, Member of the Institut, Ingres died in 1869. Within a year of ninety, he was Dominique Ingres to the last, undertaking new works with the enthusiasm and vitality of Titian. A few days before his death he gave a musical party, favourite works of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven being performed by skilled amateurs. His funeral was a veritable apotheosis, disciples, admirers and detractors swelling the enormous cortège.

Those who, like myself, have times without

number contemplated the master's *opus magnum* in the Louvre, and have studied his art as represented in the provincial museums, will quit the Musée Ingres with mixed feelings. It must occur to many that, perhaps, after all, *il gran riffiuto* of opposite kind might have better served art and the artist's fame. Had he returned to France—and to Julie—at the stipulated period, the following eighteen years being spent not on Italian but on native soil, how different the result! Then of his work he could have said, as did Chantecler of his song—

"Mon chant
Qui n'est pas de ces chants qu'on chante en cherchant
Mais qu'on reçoit du sol natal comme une séve."

Would not most of us willingly give Ingres' greatest classical and historic canvases for one or two portraits, say that of Bertin, or, better still, for a group like that of the Stamiti family?[1] What a portrait gallery he would have bequeathed, how would he have made the men and women of his time live again before us!

Ingres, the artist, ever felt sure of himself. Did the lover look back, regretting the broken word, the wrong done to another? We do not know. His life was throughout upright, austere, free

[1] Both are reproduced, with many other works, in M. Momméja's volume.

from blot; born and bred a Catholic, he had doubtless Huguenot blood in his veins, many of his most striking characteristics pointed to this inference.

A word more concerning Montauban itself. The stronghold of reform, that defied all Richelieu's attempts to take it, is to this day essentially a Protestant town. Half of its inhabitants have remained faithful to the faith of their ancestors. Tourists will note the abundance of cypress trees marking Huguenot graves, the capital of Tarn and Garonne is a veritable Calvinistic *Campo Santo*. After the Revocation, many families fled hence to England, their descendants to this day loving and reverencing the country which gave them a home.

Montauban, as we should expect, has raised a splendid monument to its one great citizen.

Since writing these lines, an Ingres exhibition has been opened in the Georges Petit Gallery, Paris. Apropos of this event, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (May 15, 1911) contains a striking paper by the art-critic, M. de Sizeraine. Some of the conclusions here arrived at are startling. Certain authorities on art are said to regard the great Montalbanais as a victim of daltonism—in other words, colour-blind!

In company of the mere amateur, this authority

turns with relief from the master's historical and allegorical pieces to his wonderfully speaking portraits. Here, he says, all is simple, nothing is commonplace, nothing is unexpected, and yet nothing resembles what we have seen elsewhere; we find no embellishment, no stultification. He adds: "In art, as in literature, works which survive are perhaps those in which the artist or writer has put the most of himself, not those in which he has had most faith. The "Vœu de Louis XIII.," the "Thétis" of Ingres, we may compare to Voltaire's *Henriade* and to the *Franciade* of Ronsard, all belong to the category of the *opus magnum* that has failed, and of which its creator is proud." With the following charming simile the essay closes—

"Posterity is a great lady, she passes, reviews the *opus magnum, la grande machine* disdainfully, satirically; all seems lost, the artist condemned. But by chance she catches sight of a neglected picture turned to the wall in a corner or passage, some happy inspiration that has cost its author little pains, but in which he has not striven beyond his powers, and in which he has put the best of himself. The *grande dame* catches it up, holds it to the light. 'Ha! here is something pretty!' she cries. And the artist's fame is assured."

Has not Victor Hugo focused the same truth in a line—

"Ici-bas, le joli c'est le nécessaire!"

And our own Keats also—

"For 'tis the eternal law,
That first in beauty should be first in might."

X

MY PYRENEAN VALLEY AT LAST

MY PYRENEAN VALLEY AT LAST

Ossɛ, la bien aimée
Toi, du vallon
Le choix, la fille aînée
Le vrai fleuron!
C'est sur toi qu'est fixée
Dans son amour,
La première pensée
Du roi du jour
Comme à sa fiancée
L'amant accourt.

XAVIER NAVARROT.

BETWEEN Toulouse and Tarbes the scenery is quite unlike that of the Gard and the Aude. Instead of the interminable vineyards round about Aigues-Mortes and Carcassonne, we gaze here upon a varied landscape.

Following the Garonne with the refrain of Nadaud's famous song in our minds—

"Si la Garonne avait voulu,"—

we traverse a vast plain or low vale rich in many-coloured crops: buckwheat, sweeps of creamy blossom, dark-green rye, bluish-green Indian corn with silvery flower-head, and purple clover, and here and there a patch of vine are mingled together before us; in the far distance the

Pyrenees, as yet mere purple clouds against the horizon.

We soon note a peculiarity of this region—vines trained to trees, a method in vogue a hundred years ago. "Here," wrote Arthur Young, when riding from Toulouse to St. Martory on his way to Luchon, "for the first time I see rows of maples with vines trained in festoons from tree to tree"; and farther on he adds, "medlars, plums, cherries, maples in every hedge with vines trained." The straggling vine-branches have a curious effect, but the brightness of the leafage is pleasant to the eye. No matter how it grows, to my thinking the vine is a lovely thing.

The rich plain passed, we reach the slopes of the Pyrenees, their wooded sides presenting a strange, even grotesque, appearance, owing to the mathematical regularity with which the woods are cut, portions being close shaven, others left intact in close juxtaposition, solid phalanxes of trees and clearings at right angles. The fancy conjures up a Brobdingnagian wheat-field partially cut in the green stage. Sad havoc is thus made of once beautiful scenes, richly-wooded slopes having lost half their foliage.

A hundred years ago Lourdes was a mere mountain fortress, a State prison to which unhappy persons were consigned by *lettres de cachet*. Apologists of the Ancien Régime assert, in the

first place, that these Bastilles were comfortable, even luxurious retreats; in the second, that *lettres de cachet* were useful and necessary; in the third, that neither Bastilles nor *lettres de cachet* were esorted to on the eve of the Revolution. Let us hear what Arthur Young has to say on the subject. "I take the road to Lourdes," he writes in August 1787, "where is a castle on a rock, garrisoned for the mere purpose of keeping State prisoners, sent hither by *lettres de cachet*. Seven or eight are *known* to be here at present; thirty have been here at a time; and many for life—torn by the relentless hand of jealous tyranny from the bosom of domestic comfort, from wives, children, friends, and hurried, for crimes unknown to themselves, most probably for virtues, to languish in this detested abode, and die of despair. Oh liberty, liberty!"

Great is the contrast between the lovely entourage of this notorious place and the triviality and vulgar nature of its commerce. The one long, winding street may be described as a vast bazaar, more suited to Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims than to holders of railway tickets and contemporaries of the Eiffel Tower.

A brisk trade is done here, the place wearing the aspect of a huge fair. Rosaries, crosses, votive tablets, ornamental cans for holding the miraculous waters, drinking-cups, candles, photo-

graphs, images, medals are sold by millions. The traffic in these wares goes on all day long, the poorest "pilgrim" taking away souvenirs.

The Lourdes of theology begins where the Lourdes of bartering ends. As we quit the long street of bazaars and brand-new hotels, the first glimpse gives us an insight into its life and meaning, makes us feel that we ought to have been living two or three hundred years ago. We glance back at the railway station, wondering whether a halt were wise, whether indeed the gibbet, wheel, and stake were not really prepared for heretics like ourselves!

The votive church built on the outer side of the rock from which flows the miraculous fountain is a basilica of sumptuous proportions, representing an outlay of many millions of francs. Its portico, with horse-shoe staircase in marble, spans the opening of the green hills, behind which lie grotto and spring. We are reminded of the enormous church now crowning the height of Montmartre at Paris; here, as there and at Chartres, is a complete underground church of vast proportions. The whole structure is very handsome, the grey and white building-stone standing out against verdant hills and dark rocks. A beautifully laid-out little garden with a statue of the miracle-working Virgin lies between church and town.

Looking from the lofty platform on the other

side of the upper church, we behold a strange scene. The space below is black with people, hundreds and thousands of pilgrims, so called, priests and nuns being in full force, one and all shouting and gesticulating with fierce zealotry, a priest or two holding forth from a temporary pulpit.

Between these closely-serried masses is a ghastly array. On litters, stretchers, beds, chairs, lie the deformed, the sick, the moribund, awaiting their turn to be sprinkled with the miraculous waters or blessed by the bishop. These poor people, many of whom are in the last stage of illness, have for bearers, volunteers; these are priests, young gentlemen of good family, and others, who wear badges and leather traces, by which they attach themselves to their burden.

All day long masses are held inside the church and in the open air; at a given signal the congregation stretching out their arms in the form of a cross, prostrating themselves on the ground, kissing the dust.

We must descend the broad flight of steps in order to obtain a good view of the grotto, an oval opening in the rocks made to look like a stalactite cave, with scores and hundreds of *ex-votos* in the shape of crutches. Judging from this display, there should be no more lame folks left in France. The Virgin of Lourdes must have healed them

all. In a niche of the grotto stands an image of the Virgin, and behind, perpetually lighted with candles, an altar, at which mass is celebrated several times daily.

On one side, the rock has been pierced in several places, deliciously pure, cool water issuing from the taps. Crowds are always collected here, impatient to drink of the miraculous fountain, and to fill vessels for use at home. We see tired, heated invalids, and apparently dying persons, drinking cups of this ice-cold water; enough, one would think, to kill them outright. Close by is a little shop full of trifles for sale, but so thronged at all hours of the day that you cannot get attended to; purchasers lay down their money, take up the object desired, and walk away. Here may be bought a medal for two sous, or a crucifix priced at several hundred francs.

The praying, chanting, and prostrating are at their height when the violet-robed figure of a bishop is caught sight of, tripping down a side-path leading from the town. Blessing any who chance to meet him on the way, chatting pleasantly with his companion, a portly gentleman wearing the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour, the bishop hastens towards the grotto, dons his sacerdotal robes of ivory-white and gold, and celebrates mass. The ceremony over, there is a

general stir. Adjusting their harness, the bearers form a procession, the bishop emerges from the grotto, and one by one the thirty and odd litters are drawn before him to be sprinkled, blessed—and healed! alas, such, doubtless, is the fond delusion of many.

The sight of so many human wrecks, torsos and living skeletons all agog for life, health, and restoration, is even less heart-breaking than that of their companions. Here we see a mother bending with agonized looks over some white-faced, wasted boy, whose days, even hours, are clearly numbered; there a father of a wizen-faced, terribly deformed girl, a mite to look at, but fast approaching womanhood, brought hither to be put straight and beautiful. Next our eye lights on the emaciated form of a young man evidently in the last stage of consumption, his own face hopeful still, but what forlornness in that of the adoring sister by his side! These are spectacles to make the least susceptible weep. Grotesque is the sight of a priest who must be ninety at least; what further miracle can he expect, having already lived the life of three generations?

The last litter drawn by, the enormous crowd breaks up; tall candles are offered to those standing near, and a procession is formed, headed by the bishop under his gold and white baldachin, a large number of priests following behind, then

several hundred men, women, and children, the black and white robes of the priests and nuns being conspicuous. Chanting as they go, outsiders falling on their knees at the approach of the baldachin, the pilgrims now wind in solemn procession round the statue in front of the church, and finally enter, when another religious celebration takes place. Services are going on all day long and late into the night. Hardly do these devotees give themselves time for meals, which are a scramble at best, every hotel and boarding-house much overcrowded. The *table d'hôte* dinner, or one or two dishes, are hastily swallowed, and the praying, chanting, marching and prostrating begin afresh. At eight o'clock from afar comes the sound of pilgrims' voices as the procession winds towards the grotto.

There is picturesqueness in these nocturnal celebrations, the tapers twinkling against the dark heavens, the voices dying away in the distance. Superstition has its season as well as sulphur-baths and chalybeate springs. The railway station is a scene of indescribable confusion; enormous contingents come for a few hours only, the numbered trains that brought them are drawn up outside the main lines awaiting their departure. Here we are hustled by a motley throng; fashionable ladies bedizened with rosaries, badges, and medallions; elegant young gentlemen, the

jeunesse dorée of a vanished *régime*, proudly wearing the pilgrim's badge, all travelling third-class and in humble company for their soul's good; peasant women from Brittany in charming costumes; a very, very few blue blouses of elderly civilians; enormous numbers wearing religious garb.

It seems a pity that a bargain could not be struck by France and Germany, the Emperor William receiving Lourdes in exchange for Metz or Strasburg! Lourdes must represent a princely revenue, far in excess, I should say, of any profit the Prussian Government will ever make out of the annexed provinces; and as nobody lives there, and visitors only remain a day or two, it would not matter to the most patriotic French pilgrim going to whom the place belonged.

The tourist brings evil as well as good in his track, and the tax upon glorious scenery here is not the globe-trotter but the mendicant. Gavarnie is, without doubt, as grandiose a scene as Western Europe can show. In certain elements of grandeur none other can compete with it. But until a balloon service is organized between Luz and the famous Cirque it is impossible to make the journey with an unruffled temper. The traveller's way is beset by juvenile vagrants, bare-faced and importunate as Neapolitans or Arabs.

Lovers of aërial navigation have otherwise not

much left to wish for. Nothing can be more like a ride in cloudland than the drive from Pierrefitte to Luz and from Luz to Gavarnie. The splendid rock-hewn road is just broad enough to admit of two carriages abreast. On one side are lofty, shelving rocks, on the other a stone coping two feet high, nothing else to separate us from the awful abyss below, a ravine deep as the measure of St. Paul's Cathedral from base to apex of golden cross. We hear the thunder of the river as it dashes below by mountains two-thirds the height of Mont Blanc, their dark, almost perpendicular sides wreathed with cloud, on their summits gleaming never-melted snow, here and there the sombre parapets streaked with silvery cascades. At intervals the Titanic scene is relieved by glimpses of pastoral grace and loveliness, and such relief is necessary even to those who can gaze without giddiness on such awfulness. Between gorge and gorge lie level spaces, amid dazzlingly-green meadows the river flows calm and crystal clear, the form and hue of every pebble distinct as the pieces of a mosaic. Looking upwards we see hanging gardens and what may be called farmlets, tiny homesteads with minute patches of wheat, Indian corn, and clover on an incline so steep as to look vertical. Most beautiful and refreshing to the eye are the little

hayfields sloping from the river, the freshly-mown hay in cocks or being turned, the shorn pasture around bright as emerald. Harvest during the year 1891 was late, and in the first week of September corn was still standing; nowhere, surely, corn so amber-tinted, so golden, nowhere, surely, ripened so near the clouds. In the tiny châlets perched on the mountain ridges, folks literally dwell in cloudland, and enjoy a kind of supernal existence, having for near neighbours the eagles in their eyries and the fleet-footed chamois or izard.

These vast panoramas—towering rocks of manifold shape, Alp rising above Alp snow-capped or green-tinted, terrace upon terrace of fields and homesteads—show every variety of savage grandeur and soft beauty till we gradually reach the threshold of Gavarnie. This is aptly called "chaos," which we might fancifully suppose the leavings, "the fragments that were left," of the semicircular wall now visible, thrown up by transhuman builders, insurmountable barrier between heaven and earth. No sooner does the awful amphitheatre break upon the view, than we discern the white line of the principal fall, a slender silvery column reaching, so it seems, from star-land and moon-land to earth; river of some upper world that has overleaped the boundaries

of our own. No words can convey the remotest idea of such a scene.

We may say with regard to scenery what Lessing says of pictures, we only see in both what we bring with us to the view. More disconcerting than the importunities of beggars and donkey-drivers are the supercilious remarks of tourists. To most, of course, the whole thing is "a sad disappointment." Everything must necessarily be a disappointment to some beholders; and with critics of a certain order, the mere fact of not being pleased implies superiority. The hour's walk from the village to the Cirque is an event also in the life of the flower-lover. We have hardly eyes for Gavarnie, so completely is our gaze fascinated by the large luminous gold and silver stars gleaming conspicuously from the brilliant turf. These are the glorious flower-heads of the white and yellow Pyrenean thistle that open in sunshine as do sea-anemones, sending out lovely fringes, sunrays and moonbeams not more strikingly contrasted. As we rush hither and thither to gather them—if we can—their roots are veritable tentaculæ, other lovely flowers are to be had in plenty, the beautiful deep-blue Pyrenean gentian, monk's-hood in rich purple blossom, rose-coloured antirrhinum, an exquisite little yellow sedum, with rare ferns. On

one side, a narrow bridle-path winds round the mountain towards Spain; on the other, cottage-farms dot the green slopes; between both, parting the valley, flows the Gave, here a quietly meandering streamlet, whilst before us rises Gavarnie; a scene to which one poet only—perhaps the only one capable of grappling with such a subject—has done justice—

"Cirque, hippodrome,
Stage whereon Stamboul, Tyre, Memphis, London, Rome,
With their myriads could find place, whereon Paris at ease
Might float, as at sundown a swarm of bees,
Gavarnie, dream, miracle!"[1]

How to give some faint conception of the indescribable? Perhaps the great French poet has best succeeded in a single line—

"L'impossible est ici debout."

We feel, indeed, that we are here brought face to face with the impossible.

Let the reader then conjure up a solid mass of rock threefold the circumference of St. Paul's Cathedral; let him imagine the façade of this natural masonry of itself exceeding the compass of our great Protestant minster; then in imagina-

[1] "Un cirque, un hippodrome,
Un théâtre où Stamboul, Tyre, Memphis, Londres, Rome,
Avec leurs millions d'hommes pourraient s'asseoir.
Où Paris flotterait comme un essaim du soir.
Gavarnie!—un miracle! un rêve!"—Victor Hugo, "Dieu."

tion let him lift his eyes from stage to stage, platform to platform, the lower nearly three times the height of St. Paul's from base to apex of golden cross, the higher that of four such altitudes; their gloomy parapets streaked with glistening white lines, one a vast column of water, although their shelving sides show patches of never-melted snows; around, framing in the stupendous scene, mountain peaks, each unlike its majestic brother, each in height reaching to the shoulder of Mont Blanc. Such is Gavarnie.

My next halting-place was a remote Pyrenean village admirably adapted for the study of rural life. Within a few hours' journey of the Spanish frontier, Osse lies in the beautiful valley of Aspe, and is reached by way of Pau and Oloron. At the latter town the railway ends, and we have to drive sixteen miles across country, a delightful expedition in favourable weather. The twin towns, old and new Oloron, present the contrast so often seen throughout France, picturesque, imposing antiquity beside utilitarian ugliness and uniformity. The open suburban spaces present the appearance of an enormous drying-ground, in which are hung the blankets of the entire department. Blankets, woollen girdles or sashes, men's bonnets are manufactured here. "Pipers, blue bonnets, and oatmeal," wrote an English traveller

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OSSE

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a hundred years ago, "are found in Catalonia, Auvergne, and Suabia as well as in Lochaber." We are now in the ancient kingdom of Béarn, with a portion of Navarre added to the French crown by Henry IV., and, two hundred years later, named the department of the Basses Pyrenées.

Every turn of the road reveals new features as we journey towards Osse, having always in view the little Gave d'Aspe, after the manner of Pyrenean rivers, making cascades, waterfalls, whirlpools on its way. Most beautiful are these mountain streams, their waters of pure, deep green, their surface broken by coruscations of dazzlingly white foam and spray, their murmur ever in our ears. When far away we hardly miss the grand contours of the Pyrenees more than the music of their rushing waters. No tourists meet us here, yet whither shall we go for scenes sublimer or more engaging? On either side of the broadening velvety green valley, with its tumbling stream, rises a rampart of stately peaks, each unlike its neighbour, each having a graciousness and grandeur of its own. Here and there amid these vast solitudes is seen a white glittering thread breaking the dark masses of shelving rock, mountain torrent falling into the river from a height of several hundred feet. Few and far between are the herdsmen's châlets and scattered

cornfields and meadows, and we have the excellent carriage road to ourselves. Yet two or three villages of considerable size are passed on the way; of one, an inland spa much frequented by the peasants, I shall make mention presently.

For three hours we have wound slowly upward, and, as our destination is approached, the valley opens wide, showing white-walled, grey-roofed hamlets and small towns all singularly alike. The mountains soon close round abruptly on all sides, making us feel as if we had reached the world's end. On the other side of those snow-capped peaks, here so majestically massed before our gaze, lies Spain. We are in a part of France thoroughly French, yet within a few hours of a country strikingly contrasted with it; manners, customs, modes of thought, institutions radically different.

The remoteness and isolation of Osse explain the existence of a little Protestant community in these mountain fastnesses. For centuries the Reformed faith has been upheld here. Not, however, unmolested. A tablet in the neat little church tells how the original place of Protestant worship was pulled down by order of the king in 1685, and only reconstructed towards the close of the following century. Without church, without pastor, forbidden to assemble, obliged to bury their dead in field or garden, these dales-folk and



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mountaineers yet clung tenaciously to their religion. One compromise, and one only, they made. Peasant property has existed in the Pyrenees from time immemorial, and in order to legitimize their children and enjoy the privilege of bequeathing property, the Protestants of the Vallée d'Aspe were married according to the rites of the Romish Church. In our own days, here as elsewhere throughout France, the religious tenets handed down from father to son are adhered to without wavering, and at the same time without apparent enthusiasm. Catholics and Protestants live amicably side by side; but intermarriages are rare, and conversions from Rome to rationalism infrequent. The Sunday services of the little Protestant church are often attended by Catholics. Strangers passing through Osse, market-folk, peasants and others, never fail to inspect it curiously. The Protestant pastor is looked up to with respect and affection alike by Catholic and Protestant neighbours. The rival churches neither lose nor gain adherents to any extent. This fact is curious, especially in a spot where Protestantism is seen at its best. It shows the extreme conservatism and stability of the French character, often set down as revolutionary and fickle. In England folks often and avowedly change their religion several times during their

lives. Is not the solemn reception into Rome of instructed men and women among ourselves a matter of every day? In France it is otherwise, and when a change is made we shall generally find that the step is no retrograde one.

If the social aspect is encouraging at Osse, the same may be said of peasant property. Even a Zola must admit some good in a community unstained by crime during a period of twenty years, and bound by ties of brotherhood which render want impossible. A beautiful spirit of humanity, a delicacy rare among the most polished societies, characterize these frugal sons and daughters of the soil. Nor is consideration for others confined to fellow-beings only. The animal is treated as the friend, not the slave of man. "We have no need of the Loi Grammont here," said a resident to me; and personal observation confirmed the statement.

As sordidness carried to the pitch of brutality is often imputed to the French peasant, let me relate an incident that occurred hereabouts, not long before my visit. The land is minutely divided, many possessing a cottage and field only. One of these very small owners was suddenly ruined by the falling of a rock, his cottage, cow and pig being destroyed. Without saying a word, his neighbours, like himself in very humble cir-

cumstances, made up a purse of five hundred francs, a large sum with such donors, and, too delicate-minded to offer the gift themselves, deputed an outsider to do it anonymously. Another instance in point came to my knowledge. This was of a young woman servant, who, during the illness of her employer, refused to accept wages. "You shall pay me some other time," said the girl to her mistress; "I am sure you can ill afford to give me the money now."

Peasant property and rural life generally here presented to me some wholly new features; one of these is the almost entire self-sufficingness of very small holdings, their owners neither buying nor selling, making their little crops and stock almost completely supply their needs. Thus on a field or two, enough flax is grown with which to spin linen for home use, enough wheat and Indian corn for the year's bread-making, maize being mixed with wheaten flour; again, pigs and poultry are reared for domestic consumption—expenditure being reduced to the minimum. Coffee is a luxury seldom indulged in, a few drink home-grown wine, but all are large milk-drinkers. The poorest is a good customer of the dairy farmer.

I was at first greatly puzzled by the information of a neighbour that he kept cows for the purpose of selling milk. Osse being sixteen miles from

a railway station, possessing neither semi-detached villas, hotels, boarding-houses, convents, barracks, nor schools, and a population of from three to four hundred only, most of these small farmers—who were his patrons?

I afterwards learned that the "ha'porth of milk," which means much more in all senses than with us, takes the place of tea, coffee, beer, to say nothing of more pernicious drinks, with the majority. New milk from the cow costs about a penny a quart, and perhaps if we could obtain a similar commodity at the same price in England, even gin might be supplanted. Eggs and butter are also very cheap; but as the peasants rear poultry exclusively for their own use, it is by no means easy at Osse to procure a chicken. A little, a very little money goes to the shoemaker and general dealer, and fuel has to be bought; this item is inconsiderable, the peasants being allowed to cart wood from the communal forests for the sum of five or six francs yearly. The village is chiefly made up of farmhouses; on the mountain-sides and in the valley are the châlets and shepherds' huts, abandoned in winter. The homesteads are massed round the two churches, Catholic and Protestant, most having a narrow strip of garden and balcony carried along the upper storey, which does duty as a drying-ground.

One of these secluded hamlets, with its slated roofs, white walls, and brown shutters, closely resembles another; but Osse stands alone in possessing a Protestant church and community.

Although the little centre of a purely agricultural region, we find here one of those small, specific industries, as characteristic of French districts as soil and produce. Folks being great water-drinkers, they will have their drinking-water in a state of perfection. Some native genius long ago invented a vessel which answers the requirement of the most fastidious. This is a pail-shaped receptacle of yewen wood, bound with brass bands, both inner and outer parts being kept exquisitely clean. Water in such vessels remains cool throughout the hottest hours of the hottest summer, and the wood is exceedingly durable, standing wear and tear, it is said, hundreds of years. The turning and encasing of yewen wood, brass-bound water-jars is a flourishing manufacture at Osse.

Here may be seen and studied peasant property in many stages. I would again remark that any comparison between the condition of the English agricultural labourer and the French peasant proprietor is irrelevant and inconclusive. In the cottage of a small owner at Osse, for instance, we may discover features to shock us, often a

total absence of the neatness and veneer of the Sussex ploughman's home. Our disgust is trifling compared with that of the humblest, most hard-working owner of the soil, when he learns under what conditions lives his English compeer. To till another's ground for ten or eleven shillings a week, inhabit a house from which at a week's notice that other can eject him, possess neither home, field nor garden, and have no kind of provision against old age, such a state of things appears to our artless listener wholly inconceivable, incommensurate with modern civilization and bare justice.

As an instance of the futility of comparisons, I will mention one experience. I was returning home late one afternoon when a poorly-dressed, sunburnt woman overtook me. She bore on her head a basket of bracken, and her appearance was such that in any other country I should have expected a demand for alms. Greeting me, however, cheerfully and politely, she at once entered into conversation. She had seen me at church on Sunday, and went on to speak of the pastor, with what esteem both Catholics and Protestants regarded him, then of the people, their mode of life and condition generally.

"No," she said, in answer to my inquiry, "there is no real want here, and no vagrancy. Every-

body has his bit of land, or can find work. I come from our vineyard on the hillside yonder, and am now returning home to supper in the village—our farmhouse is there." She was a widow, she added, and with her son did the work of their little farm, the daughter-in-law minding the house and baby. They reared horses for sale, possessed a couple of cows, besides pigs and poultry.

The good manners, intelligence, urbanity, and quiet contentment of this good woman were very striking. She had beautiful white teeth, and was not prematurely aged, only very sunburnt and shabby, her black stuff dress blue with age and mended in many places, her partially bare feet thrust in sabots. The women here wear toeless or footless stockings, the upper part of the foot being bare. I presume this is an economy, as wooden shoes wear out stockings. We chatted of England, of Protestantism, and many topics before bidding each other good-night. There was no constraint on her part, and no familiarity. She talked fluently and naturally, just as one first-class lady traveller might do to a fellow-passenger. Yet, if not here in contact with the zero of peasant property, we are considering its most modest phase.

A step higher and we found an instance of the

levelling process characteristic of every stage of French society, yet hardly to be looked for in a remote Pyrenean village. In one of our afternoon rambles we overtook a farmeress, and accepted an invitation to accompany her home. She tripped cheerfully beside us; although a Catholic, on friendliest terms with her Protestant neighbours. Her thin white feet in toeless stockings and sabots, well-worn woollen petticoat, black stuff jacket, headgear of an old black silk handkerchief, would have suggested anything but the truth to the uninitiated. Here also the unwary stranger might have fumbled for a spare coin. She had a kindly, intelligent face, and spoke volubly in patois, having very little command of French. It was, indeed, necessary for me to converse by the medium of an interpreter. On approaching the village we were overtaken by a slight, handsome youth conducting a muck-wagon. This was her younger son, and his easy, well-bred greeting, and correct French, prepared me for the piece of intelligence to follow. The wearer of peasant's garb, carting manure, had passed his examination of Bachelor of Arts and Science, had, in fact, received the education of a gentleman. In his case, the patrimony being small, a professional career meant an uphill fight, but doubtless, with many another, he would attain his end.

The farmhouse was large, and, as is unusual here, apart from stables and cow-shed, the kitchen and outhouse being on the ground floor, the young men's bedrooms above. Our hostess slept in a large, curtained four-poster, occupying a corner of the kitchen. A handsome wardrobe of solid oak stood in a conspicuous place, but held only a portion of the family linen. These humble housewives count their sheets by the dozen of dozens, and linen is still spun at home, although not on the scale of former days. The better-off purchase strong, unbleached goods of local manufacture. Here and there I saw old women plying spindle and distaff, but the spinning-wheel no longer hums in every cottage doorway.

Meantime our hospitable entertainer—it is ever the women who wait on their guests—brought out home-grown wine, somewhat sour to the unaccustomed palate, and, as a corrective, home-made brandy, which, with sugar, formed an agreeable liqueur, walnuts—everything, indeed, that she had. We were also invited to taste the bread made of wheaten and maize flour mixed, a heavy, clammy compound answering Mrs. Squeers's requirement of "filling for the price." It is said to be very wholesome and nutritious.

The kitchen floor, as usual, had an unscoured look, but was clean swept, and on shelves stood rows of earthen and copper cooking-vessels and

the yewen wood, brass-bound water-jars before mentioned. The façade of the house, with its shutters and balcony, was cheerful enough, but just opposite the front door lay a large heap of farmhouse manure awaiting transfer to the pastures. A little, a very little, is needed to make these premises healthful and comfortable. The removal of the manure-heap, stables, and cow-shed; a neat garden plot, a flowering creeper on the wall, and the aspect would be in accordance with the material condition of the owner.

The property shared by this widow and her two sons consisted of between five and six acres, made up of arable land and meadow. They kept four cows, four mares for purposes of horse-breeding, and a little poultry. Milch cows here are occasionally used on the farm, an anomaly among a population extremely gentle to animals.

My next visits were paid on a Sunday afternoon, when everybody is at home to friends and neighbours. Protestant initiative in the matter of the seventh day rest has been uniformly followed, alike man and beast enjoy complete repose. As there are no cabarets and no trippers to disturb the public peace, the tranquillity is unbroken.

Our first call was upon an elder of the Protestant Church, and one of the wealthier peasants of the community. The farmhouse was on the

usual Pyrenean plan, stables and neat-houses occupying the ground floor, an outer wooden staircase leading to kitchen, parlour, and bedrooms; on the other side a balcony overlooking a narrow strip of garden.

Our host, dressed in black cloth trousers, black alpaca blouse, and spotless, faultlessly-ironed linen, received us with great cordiality and the ease of a well-bred man. His mother lived with him, a charming old lady, like himself peasant-born, but having excellent manners. She wore the traditional black hood of aged and widowed Huguenot women, and her daughter-in-law and little granddaughter, neat stuff gowns and coloured cashmere kerchiefs tied under the chin.

We were first ushered into the vast kitchen or "living room," at it would be called in some parts of England, to-day with every other part of the house in apple-pie order. Large oak presses, rows of earthen and copper cooking-vessels, an enormous flour-bin, with plain deal table and chairs, made up the furniture, from one part of the ceiling hanging large quantities of ears of Indian corn to dry. Here bread is baked once a week, and all the cooking and meals take place.

Leading out of the kitchen was the salon or drawing-room, the first I had ever seen in a

peasant farmer's house. A handsome tapestry table-cover, chimney ornaments, mirror, sofa, arm-chairs, rugs, betokened not only solid means but taste. We were next shown the grandmother's bedchamber, which was handsomely furnished with every modern requirement, white toilet-covers and bed-quilt, window-curtains, rug, wash-stand; any lady unsatisfied here would be hard indeed to please. The room of master and mistress was on the same plan, only much larger, and one most-unlooked-for item caught my eye. This was a towel-horse (perhaps the comfortably-appointed parsonage had set the fashion?), a luxury never seen in France except in brand-new hotels. As a rule the towel is hung in a cupboard. We were then shown several other bedrooms, all equally suggestive of comfort and good taste; yet the owner was a peasant, prided himself on being so, and had no intention of bringing up his children to any other condition. His farm consisted of a few hectares only, but was very productive. We saw his cows, of which he is very fond, the gentle creatures making signs of joy at their master's approach. Four or five cows, as many horses for breeding purposes, a few sheep, pigs, and poultry made up his stock. All that I saw of this family gave me a very high notion of intelligence, morality, thrift and benevolence.

Very feelingly all spoke of their animals and of the duty of human beings towards the animal world generally. It was the first time I had heard such a tone taken by French peasants, but I was here, be it remembered, among Protestants. The horrible excuse made in Italy and Brittany for cruelty to beasts, "Ce ne sont pas des chrétiens," finds no acceptance among these mountaineers.

Our second visit brought us into contact with the bourgeois element. The farmhouse, of much better appearance than the rest, also stood in the village. The holding was about the size of that just described. The young mistress was dressed in conventional style, had passed an examination at a girls' Lycée, entitling her to the *brevet supérieur* or higher certificate, her husband wore the dress of a country gentleman, and we were ushered into a drawing-room furnished with piano, pictures, a Japanese cabinet, carpets, and curtains.

The bedrooms might have been fitted up by an upholsterer of Tottenham Court Road. It must be borne in mind that I am not describing the wealthy farmers of the Seine and Marne or La Vendée.

The fact that these young people let a part of their large, well-furnished house need not surprise us. There is no poverty here, but no riches. I do not suppose that any one of the small land-

owners to whom I was introduced could retire to-morrow and live on his savings. I dare aver that one and all are in receipt of a small income from invested capital, and have a provision against sickness and old age.

The master of the house showed me his stock, five or six handsome cows of cross breed, in value from £10 to £16, the latter the maximum price here. We next saw several beautiful mares and young colts, and four horned sheep. Sheep-keeping and farming are seldom carried on together, and this young farmer was striking out a new path for himself. He told me that he intended to rear and fatten sheep, also to use artificial manure. Up to the present time, guanos and phosphates are all but unknown in these regions, only farmhouse dung is used, cows being partly kept for that purpose. Although the land is very productive, my informant assured me that much remained to be done by departure from routine and the adoption of advanced methods. The cross-breeding of stock was another subject he had taken up. Such initiators are needed in districts remote from agricultural schools, model farms, and State-paid chairs of agriculture.

Each of the four instances just given differed from the other. The first showed us peasant property in its simplest development, a little

family contentedly living on their bit of land, making its produce suffice for daily needs, independent of marts and markets as the members of a primitive community.

The second stage showed us a wholly dissimilar condition, yet not without its ideal side. We were brought face to face with that transitional phase of society and pacific revolution, of happiest augury for the future. From the peasant ranks are now recruited contingents that will make civil wars impossible, men who carry into politics learning and the arts, those solid qualities that have made rural France the admiration of the world, and more than once saved her Republic.

The first instance exemplified the intense conservatism of the French peasant. Liberal in politics, enlightened in religion, open to the reception of new ideas, here was nevertheless a man absolutely satisfied with social conditions as they affected himself and his children, utterly devoid of envy or worldly ambition. To reap the benefits of his toil, deserve the esteem of his neighbours, bequeath his little estate, improved and enriched, to his heirs, surely this was no contemptible ideal either.

The last case differed from the other three. We were now reminded of the English tenant, or even gentleman-farmer—with a differance. Alike

master and mistress had received a good education and seen something of the world; they could enjoy music and books. But in spite of her *brevet supérieur*, the wife attended to her dairy; and although the husband was a gentleman in manners and appearance, he looked after the stock. They lived, too, on friendliest terms with their less-instructed and homelier neighbours, the black alpaca blouse and coloured kerchief, doing duty for bonnet, being conspicuous at their Sunday receptions. Not even a Zola can charge French village-life with the snobbishness so conspicuous in England. It will be amply shown from the foregoing examples that peasant property is no fixed condition to be arbitrarily dealt with after the manner of certain economists. On the contrary, it is many-phased; the fullest and widest development of modern France is indeed modern France itself. The peasant owner of the soil has attained the highest position in his own country. No other class can boast of such social, moral and material ascendency. He is the acknowledged arbitrator of the fortunes of France.

I will now cite two facts illustrating the bright side of peasant property in its humblest phase, where we have been told to expect sordidness, even brutality. The land hereabouts, as I have before stated, is excessively divided, the holdings

being from two and a half acres in extent and upwards. It often happens that the younger children of these small owners give up their share of the little family estate without claiming a centime of compensation, and seek their fortunes in the towns. They betake themselves to handicrafts and trade, in their turn purchasing land with the savings from daily wages.

Again, it is supposed that the life of the peasant owner is one of uniform, unbroken drudgery, his daily existence hardly more elevated than that of the ox harnessed to his plough. Who ever heard of an English labourer taking a fourteen days' rest at the seaside? When did a rheumatic ploughman have recourse to Bath or Buxton? They order these things better in France.

Between Osse and Oloron stands Escot, long famous for its warm springs. The principal patrons of this modest watering-place are the peasants. It is their Carlsbad, their Homburg, many taking a season as regularly as the late King Edward. The thing is done with thoroughness, but at a minimum of cost. They pay half a franc daily for a room, and another half-franc for the waters, cooking their meals in the general kitchen of the establishment. Where the French peasant believes, his faith is phenomenal. Some of these valetudinarians drink as many as forty-six glasses

of mineral water a day! What must be their capacities in robust health? The bourgeois or civilian element is not absent. Hither from Pau and Oloron come clerks and small functionaries with their families. Newspapers are read and discussed in company. We may be sure that the rustic spa is a little centre of sociability and enlightenment.

Let me now say something about the crops of this sweet Pyrenean valley. The chief of these are corn, maize, rye, potatoes, and clover; the soil being too dry and poor for turnips and beetroot. Flax is grown in small quantities, and here and there we seen vines, but the wine is thin and sour.

From time immemorial, artificial irrigation has been carried on in the Vallée d'Aspe, and most beautiful is the appearance of the brilliantly green pastures, intersected by miniature canals in every direction; the sweet pastoral landscape framed by mountain peaks of loveliest colour and majestic shape. These well-watered grasslands produce two or even three crops a year; the second, or *regain* as it is called, was being got in early in September, and harvest having taken place early, clover was already springing up on the cleared cornfields. Everywhere men and women were afield making hay or scattering manure on the

meadows, the latter sometimes being done with the hands.

All these small farmers keep donkeys and mules, and on market-days the roads are alive with cavalcades; the men wearing gay waist-sashes, flat cloth caps, or berets, the women coloured kerchiefs. The type is uniform—medium stature, spareness, dark eyes and hair, and olive complexion predominating. Within the last thirty years the general health and physique have immensely improved, owing to better food and wholesomer dwellings. Goître and other maladies arising from insufficient diet have disappeared. Epidemics, I was assured, seldom work havoc in this valley; and though much remains to be done in the way of drainage and sanitation, the villages have a clean, cheerful look.

The last ailment that would occur to us proves most fatal to those hardy country folks. They are very neglectful of their health, and as the changes of temperature are rapid and sudden, the chief mortality arises from inflammation of the lungs. It is difficult indeed to defend oneself against so variable a climate. On my arrival the heat was tropical. Twelve hours later I should have rejoiced in a fire. Dangerous, too, is the delicious hour after sunset, when mist rises from

the valley, whilst yet the purple and golden glow on the peaks above tempts us to linger abroad.

The scenery is grandiose and most beautiful. Above the white-walled, grey-roofed villages and townlings scattered about the open, rise sharp-pointed green hills or monticules, one gently over-topping the other; surmounting these, lofty barren peaks, recalling the volcanic chains of Auvergne, the highest snow-capped point twice the altitude of the Puy de Dôme, two-thirds that of Mont Blanc.

Whichever way we go we find delightful scenery. Hidden behind the folded hills, approached by lovely little glades and winding bridle-path, tosses and foams the Gave d'Aspe, its banks thickly set with willow and salicornia, its solitary coves inviting the bather. The witchery of these mountain streams grows upon us in the Pyrenees. We hunger for the music of their cascades when far away. The sun-lit, snow-lit peaks, towering into the brilliant blue heavens, are not deserted as they appear. Shepherd farmers throughout the summer dwell in huts here, and welcome visitors with great affability.

Let me narrate a fact interesting alike to the naturalist and meteorologist. On the 7th September, 1891, the heat on one of these summits, nine thousand feet above the sea-level, was so intense that a little flock of sheep were seen liter-

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ally hugging the snow, laying their faces against the cool masses, huddled about them, as shivering mortals round a fire in winter. And, a little way off, the eye-witnesses of this strange scene gathered deep blue irises in full bloom.

On the lower slopes the farmers leave their horses to graze, giving them a look from time to time. One beautiful young horse lost its life just before my arrival, unwarily approaching a precipitous incline. As a rule accidents are very rare.

The izard or Pyrenean chamois, although hunted as game, is not yet a survival here, nor the eagle and bear, the latter only making its appearance in winter-time.

Tent-life in these mountain-sides is quite safe and practicable. Who can say? A generation hence and these magnificent Alps may be tunnelled by railways, crowned by monster hotels, peopled from July to October with tourists in search of disappointments.

At present the Vallée d'Aspe is the peacefullest in the world. Alike on week-days and Sundays the current of life flows smoothly. Every morning from the open windows of the parsonage may be heard the sweet, simple hymns of the Lutheran Church, master and mistress, servants and children, uniting in daily thanksgiving and prayer.

And a wholesome corrective is the Sunday service after the sights of Lourdes.

The little congregation was striking. Within the altar railings stood two *anciens*, or elders, of the church, middle-aged men, tall, stalwart, the one fair as a Saxon, the other dark as a Spaniard. Both wore the dress of the well-to-do peasant, short black alpaca blouses, black cloth trousers, and spotless collars and cuffs, and both worthily represented those indomitable ancestors who neither wavered nor lost heart under direst persecution.

By the time the pastor ascended the reading-desk, the cheerful, well-kept little church was full, the men in black blouses, the women wearing neat stuff or print gowns, with silk handkerchiefs tied under the chin, widows and the aged, the sombre black-hooded garment, enveloping head and figure, of Huguenot matrons of old—supposed to have suggested the conventual garb.

Among the rest were two or three Catholics, peasants of the neighbourhood, come to look on and listen. The simple, intelligible service, the quiet fervour of the assembly, might well impress a sceptical beholder. Even more impressive is the inscription over the door. A tablet records how the first Protestant church was pulled down by order of the king after the Revocation of the

Edict of Nantes, and rebuilt on the declaration of religious liberty by the National Assembly. Gazing on that inscription and the little crowd of worshippers, a sentence of Tacitus came into my mind. Recording how not only the biographers of good men were banished or put to death, but their works publicly burnt by order of Domitian, the historian, whose sentences are volumes condensed, adds: "They fancied, forsooth"—he is speaking of the tyrant and his satellites—"that all records of these actions being destroyed, mankind could never approve of them." An illusion shared by enemies of intellectual liberty, from the Cæsars to their latest imitator, unhappily not wholly dispelled in our own day.

Whether the homeward journey is made through the Landes by way of Bayonne and Bordeaux, or through the Eastern Pyrenees by way of Perpignan, we are brought face to face with scenes of strangest transformation. In the former region the agency has been artificial, the shifting sands being fixed and solidified by plantations on a gigantic scale, and large tracts rendered fertile by artificial irrigation; in the latter, Nature has prepared the field, the more laborious portion of the husbandman's task is already done.

"The districts of sand, as white as snow and so loose as to blow," seen by Arthur Young towards the close of the last century, can hardly be said to exist in our own day. Even within twenty-five years the changes are so great as to render entire regions hardly recognizable. The stilts, or *chanques*, of which our word "shanks" is supposed to be the origin, become rarer and rarer. The creation of forests and sinking of wells, drainage, artificial manures and canals are rapidly fertilizing a once arid region; with the aspect of the country a proportionate change taking place in the material condition of the people.

No less startling is the transformation of lagoon into salt marsh, and marsh into cultivable soil, witnessed between the Spanish frontier, Perpignan and Nîmes.

Quitting Cerbère, the little town at which travellers from Barcelona re-enter French territory, we follow the coast, traversing a region long lost to fame and the world, but boasting of a brilliant history before the real history of France began.

We are here in presence of geological changes affected neither by shock nor convulsion, nor yet by infinitesimally slow degrees. A few centuries have sufficed to alter the entire contour of the coast and reverse the once brilliant destinies of

maritime cities. With the recorded experience of mediæval writers at hand, we can localize lagoons and inland seas where to-day we find belts of luxuriant cultivation. In a lifetime falling short of the Psalmist's threescore years and ten observations may be made that necessitate the reconstruction of local maps.

The charming little watering-place of Banyuls-sur-Mer, reached soon after passing the Spanish frontier, is the only place on this coast, except Cette, without a history. The town is built in the form of an amphitheatre, its lovely little bay surrounded by rich southern vegetation. The oleanders and magnolias in full bloom, gardens and vineyards, are no less strikingly contrasted with the barrenness and monotony that follows, than Banyuls itself, spick and span, brand-new, with the buried cities scattered on the way, ancient as Tyre and Sidon, and once as flourishing. There is much sadness yet poetic charm in the landscape sweeps of silvery-green olive or bluish salicornia against a pale-blue sky, dull-brown fishing villages bordering sleepy lagoons, stretches of white sand, with here and there a glimpse of the purple, rock-hemmed sea. Little of life animates this coast, in many spots the custom-house officer and a fisherman or two being the sole inhabitants, their nearest neighbours removed

from them by many miles. Only the flamingo, the heron, and the sea-gull people these solitudes, within the last few years broken by the whistle of the locomotive. We are following the direct line of railway between Barcelona and Paris.

The first of the buried cities is the musically-named Elne, anciently Illiberis, now a poor little town of the department of the Eastern Pyrenees, hardly, indeed, more than a village, but boasting a wondrous pedigree. We see dull-brown walls, ilex groves, and above low-lying walls the gleaming sea. This apparently deserted place occupies the site of city upon city. Seaport, metropolis, emporium had here reached their meridian of splendour before the Greek and the Roman set foot in Gaul. Already in Pliny's time the glories of the Elne had become tradition. We must go farther back than Phœnician civilization for the beginnings of this town, halting-place of Hannibal and his army on their march towards Rome. The great Constantine endeavoured to resuscitate the fallen city, and for a brief space Elne became populous and animated. With other once flourishing seaports it has been gradually isolated from the sea, and the same process is still going on.

Just beyond Perpignan a lofty tower, rising

amid vineyards and pastures, marks the site of Ruscino, another ancient city and former seaport. The Tour de Roussillon is all that now remains of a place once important enough to give its name to a province. Le Roussillon, from which was formed the department of the Pyrénées Orientales, became French by the treaty of the Pyrenees in 1659. Here also the great Carthaginian halted, and here, we learn, he met with a friendly reception.

Monotonous as are these wide horizons and vast stretches of marsh and lagoon, they appeal to the lover of solitude and of the more pensive aspects of nature. The waving reeds against the pale sky, the sweeps of glasswort and terebinth, show delicate gradations of colour; harmonious, too, the tints of far-off sea and environing hills. Not cities only seem interred here: the railway hurries us through a world in which all is hushed and inanimate, as if, indeed, mankind no less than good fortune had deserted it. The prevailing uniformity is broken by the picturesquely placed little town of Salses and the white cliffs of Leucate. Strabo and Pomponius Mela describe minutely the floating islands or masses of marine plants moving freely on the lake of Salses. Here, as elsewhere, the coastline is undergoing slow but

steady modification, yet we are in presence of phenomena that engaged the attention of writers two thousand years ago.

From this point till we approach Cette the region defies definition. It is impossible to determine nicely where the land ends and the sea begins. The railway follows a succession of inland salt lakes and lagoons, with isolated fishermen's cabins, reminding us of lake-dwellings. In some places the hut is approached by a narrow strip of solid ground, on either side surrounded by water, just admitting the passage of a single pedestrian. The scene is unspeakably desolate. Only sea-birds keep the fisher-folk company; only the railway recalls the busy world far away.

Of magnificent aspect is Narbonne, the Celtic Venice, as it rises above the level landscape. The great seaport described by Greek historians six centuries before our own era, the splendid capital of Narbonese Gaul, rival of the Roman Nîmes and of the Greek Arles, is now as dull a provincial town as any throughout France. Invasions, sieges, plagues, incendiaries, most of all religious persecutions, ruined the mediæval Narbonne. The Jewish element prevailed in its most prosperous phase, and M. Renan in his history of Averroës shows how much of this prosperity and

intellectual pre-eminence was due to the Jews. The cruel edicts of Philip Augustus against the race proved no less disastrous here than the expulsion of Huguenots elsewhere later. The decadence of Narbonne as a port is due to natural causes. Formerly surrounded by lagoons affording free communication with the sea, the Languedocian Venice has gradually lost her advantageous position. The transitional stage induced such unhealthy climatic conditions that at one period there seemed a likelihood of the city being abandoned altogether. In proportion as the marsh solidified the general health improved. Day by day the slow but sure process continues, and when the remaining salt lakes shall have become dry land, this region, now barren and desolate, will blossom like the rose. The hygienic and atmospheric effects of the *Eucalyptus globulus* in Algeria are hardly more striking than the amelioration wrought here in a natural way. The Algerian traveller of twenty-five years ago now finds noble forests of blue gum tree, where, on his first visit, his heart was wrung by the spectacle of a fever-stricken population. On the coast of Languedoc the change has been slower. It has taken not only a generation but a century to transform pestilential tracts into zones of healthfulness and fertility.

An interesting fact, illustrating the effect of physical agencies upon human affairs, must be here mentioned. Till within the last few years this town counted a considerable Protestant community. The ravages of the phylloxera in the neighbouring vineyards caused a wholesale exodus of vine-growers belonging to the Reformed Church, and in 1886 the number had dwindled to such an extent that the services of a pastor were no longer required. The minister in charge was transferred elsewhere.

The dull little town of Agde is another ancient site. Its name is alike a poem and a history. The secure harbourage afforded by this sheltered bay won for the place the name of Good Fortune, ἀγαθὴ τύχη, whence Agathe, Agde. A Greek settlement, its fine old church was in part constructed of the materials of a temple to Diana of Ephesus. Agde possesses interest of another kind. It is built of lava, the solitary peak rising behind it, called Le Pic de St. Loup, being the southern extremity of that chain of extinct volcanoes beginning with Mont Mezenc in the Cantal. A pathetic souvenir is attached to this lonely crater. At a time when geological ardour was rare, a Bishop of Agde, St. Simon by name, devoted years of patient investigation to the

volcanic rocks in his diocese. The result of his studies were recorded in letters to a learned friend, but the Revolution stopped the poor bishop's discoveries. He perished by the guillotine during the Terror. The celebrated founder of socialism in France was his nephew.

XI

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THE friendly visit of a few Russian naval officers lately put the country into as great a commotion as a hostile invasion. I started southward from Lyons on the 12th October, 1893, amid scenes of wholly indescribable confusion; railway stations a mere compact phalanx of excited tourists bound for Toulon, with no immediate prospect of getting an inch farther, railway officials at their wits' end, carriage after carriage hooked on to the already enormously long train, and yet crowds upon crowds left behind. Every train was, of course, late; and on the heels of each followed supplementary ones, all packed to their utmost capacity. As we steamed into the different stations "Vive la Russie!" greeted our ears. The air seemed filled with the sound; never surely was such a delirium witnessed in France since the fever heat of 1789!

At Valence, Montélimar, Avignon, Arles, the same tumult reigned; but before reaching the second place, the regulation number of carriages, twenty-five, had been exceeded, and as hardly one per cent. of the travellers alighted, we could only

pass by the disconcerted multitudes awaiting places. And a mixed company was ours—the fashionable world, select and otherwise, the demi-monde in silks and in tatters, musicians, travelling companies of actors and showmen, decorated functionaries, children, poodles, all bound for the Russian fleet!

At Marseilles, a bitter disappointment awaited some, I fear, many. No sooner were we fairly within the brilliantly-lighted, crowded station, and before the train had come to a standstill, than a stentorian voice was heard from one end of the platform to the other, crying—

"LOOK TO YOUR PURSES!"

And as the gorged carriages slowly discharged their burden, the stream of passengers wending towards the door marked "Way out," a yet louder and more awe-inspiring voice came from above, the official being perched high as an orator in the pulpit, repeating the same words—

"ATTENTION À VOTRE PORTE-MONNAIE!"

The dismay of the thwarted pickpockets may be better imagined than described. Many, doubtless, had come from great distances, confident of a golden harvest. Let us hope that the authorities of Toulon were equally on the alert.

Marseilles no more resembles Lyons, Bordeaux, Nantes, than those cities resemble each other. Less elegant than Lyons, less majestic than Bordeaux, gayer by far than Nantes, the capital of Southern France has a stamp of its own. To-day, as three thousand years ago, Marseilles may be called the threshold of the East. In these hot, bustling, noisy streets, Paris is quiet by comparison; London a Trappist monastery! Orientals, or what our French neighbours call exotics, are so common that no one looks at them. Japanese and Chinese, Hindus, Tonquinois, Annamites, Moors, Arabs, all are here, and in native dress; and writing letters in the salon of your hotel, your *vis-à-vis* at the *table d'hôte*, your fellow sightseers, east and west, to-day as of old, here come into friendly contact; and side by side with the East is the glowing life of the South. We seem no longer in France, but in a great cosmopolitan mart that belongs to the whole world.

The Marseillais, nevertheless, are French; and Marseilles, to their thinking, is the veritable metropolis. "If Paris had but her Cannebière," they say, "she would be a little Marseilles!"

Superbly situated, magnificently endowed as to climate, the *chef-lieu* of the Bouches du Rhône must be called a slatternly beauty; whilst embel-

lishing herself, putting on her jewels and splendid attire, she has forgotten to wash her face and trim her hair! Not in Horatian phrase, dainty in her neatness, Marseilles does herself injustice. Lyons is clean swept, spick and span as a toy town; Bordeaux is coquettish as her charming Bordelaise; Nantes, certainly, is not particularly careful of appearances. But Marseilles is dirty, unswept, littered from end to end; you might suppose that every householder had just moved, leaving their odds and ends in the streets, if, indeed, these beautifully-shaded walks can be so called. The city in its development has laid out alleys and boulevards instead of merely making ways, with the result that in spite of brilliant sky and burning sun, coolness and shadow are ever to be had. The Cannebière, with its blue sky, glowing foliage and gay, nonchalant, heterogeneous crowds, reminds me of the Rambla of Barcelona. Indeed, the two cities have many points of resemblance. Marseilles is greatly changed from the Marseilles I visited twenty-five years ago, to say nothing of Arthur Young's description of 1789. The only advantage with which he accredited the city was that of possessing newspapers. Its port, he wrote, was a horsepond compared to that of Bordeaux; the number of country houses dotting the hills disappointingly small. At the present time,

suburban Marseilles, like suburban London, encroaches year by year upon the country; another generation, and the sea-coast from Toulon to the Italian frontier will show one unbroken line of country houses. Of this no one can doubt who sees what is going on in the way of building.

But it is not only by beautiful villas and gardens that the city has embellished itself. What with the lavishness of the municipality, public companies, and the orthodox, noble public buildings, docks, warehouses, schools, churches, gardens, promenades, have rendered Marseilles the most sumptuous French capital after Paris. Neither Lyons, Bordeaux, Nantes, can compare with it for sumptuosity. In the Palais de Longchamps, the splendour of municipal decoration reaches its acme; the horsepond Arthur Young sneered at now affords accommodation of 340 acres, with warehouses, said to be the finest in the world; last, but not least, comes the enormous Byzantine Cathedral not yet finished, built at the cost of a quarter of a million sterling. Other new churches and public buildings without number have sprung up of late years, the crowning glory of Marseilles being its Palais de Longchamps.

This magnificent group of buildings may be called a much enlarged and much more grandiose Trocadéro. Worthily do these colossal Tritons

and sea-horses commemorate the great achievement of modern Marseilles; namely, the conveying of a river to its very doors. Hither, over a distance of fifty-four miles, are brought the abundant waters of the Durance; as we stand near, their cascades falling with the thunder of our own Lodore. But having got the river and given the citizens more than enough water with which to turn their mills, supply their domestic wants, fertilize suburban fields and gardens, the Town Council seem satisfied. The streets are certainly, one and all, watered with rushing streams, greatly to the public health and comfort. A complete system of drainage is needed to render the work complete. When we learn that even Nice is not yet drained from end to end, we need not be astonished at tardy progress elsewhere. Sanitation is ever the last thing thought of by French authorities. Late in the afternoon we saw two or three men slowly sweeping one street. No regular cleaning seems to take place. Get well out of the city, by the sea-shore, or into the Prado—an avenue of splendid villas—and all is swept and garnished. The central thoroughfares, so glowing with life and colour, and so animated by day and night, are malodorous, littered, dirty. It is a delightful drive by the sea, over against the Château d'If, forts frowning

above the rock, the deep blue waves, yellowish-brown shore, and green foliage, all in striking contrast.

We with difficulty realize that Marseilles is not the second city in France. The reason is obvious. Lyons lies less compactly together, its thickly-peopled Guillotière seems a town apart; the population of Lyons, moreover, is a sedentary one, whilst the Marseillais, being seafarers, are perpetually abroad. The character, too, is quite different, less expansive, less excitable, less emotional in the great silk-weaving capital, here gay, noisy, nonchalant. Nobody seems to find the cares of the day a burden, all to have some of the sunshine of the place in their composition. "Mon bon," a Marsellais calls his neighbour; there is no stillness anywhere. Everybody is "Mon bon" to everybody.

The out-of-door, rollicking, careless life, more especially strikes a northerner. We seem here as remote from ordinary surroundings as if suddenly transported to Benares. The commercial prosperity of the first French sea-port is attested by its lavish public works, and number of country houses, a disappointing handful in Arthur Young's time. Hardly a householder, however modest his means, who does not possess a cottage or châlet; the richer having palatial villas and

gardens. Nothing can convey a greater notion of ease and wealth than the prospect of suburban Marseilles, its green hills, rising above the sea, thickly dotted with summer houses in every part.

All who wish to realize the advance of French cities since 1870–71 should visit Marseilles. Only those who knew it long ago can measure the change, and greater changes still are necessary ere its sanitary conditions match climate and situation.

From Marseilles to Nice, from the land of the olive to that of the palm, is a long and wearisome journey. That tyrannical monopoly, the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée Railway Company, gives only slow trains, except to travellers provided with through tickets; and these so inconveniently arranged, that travellers unprovided with refreshments, have no opportunity of procuring any on the way. Whenever we travel by railway in France we are reminded of the crying need for competition. The all-omnipotent P.-L.-M. does as it pleases, and it is quite useless for travellers to complain. Every inch of the way points to the future of the Riviera—a future not far off. A few years hence and the sea-coast from Marseilles to Mentone will be one unbroken line of hotels and villas. The process is proceeding at a rapid rate. When Arthur Young made this journey a century

ago, he described the country around Toulon thus: "Nine-tenths are waste mountain, and a wretched country of pines, box, and miserable aromatics." At the present time, the brilliant red soil, emerald crops, and gold and purple leafage of stripped vine, make up a picture of wondrous fertility. At every point we see vineyards of recent creation; whilst not an inch of soil between the olive trees is wasted. On the 28th of October the landscape was bright with autumn crops, some to be *répiqué*, or planted out according to the Chinese system before mentioned.

The first thing that strikes the stranger at Nice is its Italian population. These black-eyed, dark-complexioned, raven-haired, easy-going folks form as distinct a type as the fresh-complexioned, blue-eyed Alsatian. That the Niçois are French at heart is self-evident, and no wonder, when we compare their present condition with that of the past. We see no beggars or ragged, wretched-looking people. If the municipal authorities have set themselves the task of putting down mendicity, they have succeeded. French enterprise, French capital is enriching the population from one end of the Alpes Maritimes to the other. At the present time there must be tens of thousands of workmen employed in the building of hotels and villas between Marseilles and Ventimille. That

the Riviera will finally be overbuilt no one can doubt; much of the original beauty of the country is already destroyed by this piling up of bricks and mortar, more beauty is doomed. But meantime work is brisk, wages are high, and the Post Office savings bank and private banks tell their own tale.

Of course the valetudinarians contribute to the general prosperity, a prosperity which it is difficult for residents in an English watering-place to realize. Thus I take up a Hastings newspaper to find a long list of lodging-house keepers summoned for non-payment of taxes. Arrived at Nice, a laundress employed by my hostess immediately came to see if I had any clothes for her. On bringing back the linen she deposited it in my room, saying I could pay her when fetching the next bundle. I let her go, but called her back, thinking that perhaps the poor woman had earned nothing for months and was in distress. My hostess afterwards informed me with a smile that this good woman had £2,500 in the bank. I could multiply instances in point.

If the condition of the working classes has immensely improved, the cost of living has not stood still. A householder informed me that prices of provisions, servants' wages, house rent and other items of domestic economy have tripled

within the last twenty years. There is every prospect that this increase will continue. Last winter hotels and boarding-houses at Nice were all full; fast as new ones are built, they fill to overflowing. And, of course, the majority of visitors are rich. No others should come; they are not wanted.

In studying the rural population we must bear in mind one fact—namely, the line of demarcation separating the well-to-do peasants of the plain from the poor and frugal mountaineer. Follow the mule track from Mentone to Castillon, and we find a condition of things for squalor and poverty unmatched throughout France. Visit an olive-grower in the valley of the Var, and we are once more amid normal conditions of peasant property. My first visit was to the land of Goshen.

Provided with a letter of introduction to a farmer, I set off for the village of St. Martin du Var, a village of five hundred and odd souls, only within the last year or two accessible by railway. The new line, which was to have connected Nice with Digne and Cap, had been stopped short half-way, the enterprising little company who projected it being thereby brought to the verge of ruin. This fiasco, due, I am told, to the jealous interference of the P.-L.-M., is a great misfortune to travellers, the line partially opened up leading

through a most wildly picturesque and lovely region, and being also of great commercial and strategic importance. But that terrible monopoly, the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée, will tolerate no rivals. Folks bound from Gap to Nice must still make the long round by way of Marseilles in order to please the Company; merchandise—and, in case of a war with Italy, which may Heaven avert! —soldiers and ammunition must do the same.

The pretty new "Gare du Sud" invites patronage, and three services are performed daily. On this little line exists no third class. I imagine, then, that either the very poor are too poor to take train at all, or that there are none unable to pay second-class fare. In company of priests, peasants, and soldiers, I took a second-class place, the guard joining us and comfortably reading a newspaper as soon as we were fairly off.

It is a superb little journey to St. Martin du Var. The line may be described as a succession of tunnels, our way lying between lofty limestone cliffs and the Var, at the present time almost dry. As we slowly advance, the valley widens, and on either side are broad belts of verdure and fertility; fields, orchards, gardens, olive trees feathering the lower slopes, here and there, little villages perched high above the valley. One charming feature of the landscape is the aspen; so

silvery were its upper leaves in the sun that at first I took them for snow-white blossoms. These verdant stretches on either side of the river were formerly mere waste, redeemed and rendered cultivable by means of dykes.

My destination is reached in an hour, a charmingly placed village amid beautiful mountain scenery, over against it towering the hamlet of La Roquette, apparently inaccessible as cloudland. Here a tributary stream joins the Var, the long winding valley, surrounded by lofty crags and olive-clad slopes, affording a delightful and most exhilarating prospect. The weather on this 20th of October was that of a perfect day in July.

St. Martin du Var has its Mairie, handsome communal schools, and large public walks or recreation ground, a parallelogram planted with trees. The place has a neglected, Italian aspect; at the same time an aspect of ease and contentment. The black-eyed, olive-complexioned, Italian-looking children are uniformly well dressed, with good shoes and stockings. French children, even of the poorest class, are always decently shod.

I found my host at dinner with his wife, little daughter, and sister-in-law. The first impression of an uninitiated traveller would be of poverty. The large bare kitchen was unswept and untidy;

the family dishes—soup, vegetables, olives, good white bread, wine—were placed on the table without cloth or table-cover. As will be seen, these hard-working, frugal people were rich; in England they would have servants to wait upon them, fine furniture, and wear fashionable clothes. My letter of introduction slowly read and digested, the head of the family placed himself at my disposal. We set off on a round of inspection, the burning mid-day sun here tempered by a delicious breeze.

We first visited the olive-presses and corn-mill —this farmer was village miller as well as olive grower—all worked by water-power and erected by himself at a heavy outlay. Formerly these presses and mills were worked by horses and mules after the manner of old-fashioned threshing-machines, but in Provence as in Brittany, progress is now the order of the day.

In order to supply these mills, a little canal was dug at my host's own expense, and made to communicate with the waters of the Var; thus a good supply is always at hand.

The enormous olive-presses and vats are now being got in for the first or October harvest. This is the harvest of windfalls or fallen fruit, green or black as the case may be, and used for making an inferior kind of oil. The second harvest or

gathering of the olives remaining on the trees takes place in April. Linen is spread below, and the berries gently shaken off. I may add that the periods of olive harvests vary in different regions, often being earlier or later. An olive tree produces on an average a net return of twelve francs, the best returns being alternate or biennial; the roots are manured from time to time, otherwise the culture is inexpensive. The trees are of great age and, indeed, are seldom known to die. The "immortal olive" is, indeed, no fiction. In this especial district no olive trees have, within living memory, been killed by frost, as was the case in Spain some years ago. Nevertheless, the peaks around St. Martin du Var are tipped with snow in winter. The olive harvests and necessary preparations require a large number of hands, the wages of men averaging three francs, of women, the half. Thus at the time I write of, day labourers in remote regions of Provence receive just upon fourteen shillings and sixpence per week; whereas I read in the English papers that Essex farmers are reducing the pittance of twelve and even ten shillings per week for able-bodied men.

Ten days later, my cicerone said that the first harvest would be in active progress, and he most cordially invited me to revisit him for the purpose

of looking on. From the lees of the crushed berries a third and much inferior oil is made and used in the manufacture of soap, just as what is called *piquette* or sour wine is made in Brittany from the lees of crushed grapes. I was assured by this farmer that the impurity of olive oil we so often complain of in England, arises from adulteration at the hands of retailers. Table oil as it issues from the presses of the grower is absolutely pure; merchants add inferior qualities or poppy oil, described by me in an earlier page, and which my present host looked upon with supreme contempt. The olive, with the vine and tobacco, attains the maximum of agricultural profits. This farmer alone sells oil to the annual value of several thousand pounds, and to the smaller owner also it is the principal source of income. Peasant owners or tenants of an acre or two grow a little corn as well, this chiefly for their own use.

The interior of the corn-mill presented an amusing scene. Two or three peasants were squabbling with my host's subordinate over their sacks of flour; one might have supposed from the commotion going on and the general air of vindictive remonstrance that we were suddenly transported to a seigneurial mill. A few conciliatory words from the master put all straight, and soon after

we saw the good folks, one of them an old woman, trotting off on donkeys with their sack of corn slung before them. I need hardly say that the talk of these country-people among themselves is always in patois, not a word of which is intelligible to the uninitiated.

Just above the mills are groves of magnificent old olive trees, and alongside the little railway were bright strips of lucerne and pasture, folks here and there getting in their tiny crops of hay.

The iron road is not yet regarded as an unmixed good. My host told me that local carters and carriers had been obliged in consequence to sell their horses and carts and betake themselves to day labour. Such drawbacks are, of course, inevitable, but the ulterior advantage effected by the railway is unquestionable. I should say that nowhere are life and property safer than in these mountain-hemmed valleys. The landlady of the little hotel at St. Martin du Var assured me that she always left her front door open all night. Nothing had ever happened to alarm her but the invasion of three English ladies at midnight, one of these of gigantic stature and armed with a huge stick. The trio were making a pedestrian journey across country, apparently taking this security for granted. Neither brigands nor burglars could

have given the poor woman a greater fright than the untimely appearance of my countrywomen.

It was now too hot to visit the open tracts of pasture and cultivation alongside the Var. The farmer's wife proposed a shady walk to a neighbouring farm instead, our errand being to procure milk for my five o'clock tea. Without hat or umbrella, my companion set off, chatting as we went. She explained to me that on Sundays she wore bonnet and mantle after the fashion of a *bourgeoise;* in other words, she dressed like a lady, but that neither in summer nor winter at any other time did she cover her head. She was a pleasant-mannered, intelligent, affable woman, almost toothless, as are so many well-to-do middle-aged folks in France. Dentists must fare badly throughout the country. No one ever seems to have a guinea to spend upon false teeth.

We were soon out of the village, and passing the pretty garden of the Gendarmerie, reached a scene of unimaginable, unforgettable beauty. Never shall I forget the splendour of the olive trees set around a wide, brilliantly green meadow; near the farmhouse groves of pomegranate, orange and lemon with ripening fruit; beside these, medlar and hawthorn trees (*cratægus azarolus*), the golden leafage and coral-red fruit of the latter having a striking effect; beyond, silvery

peaks, and, above all, a heaven of warm, yet not too dazzling blue. At the farther end of the meadow, in which a solitary cow grazed at will, a labourer was preparing a ribbon-like strip of land for corn, beside him, pretending to work too, his little son of five years. My hostess held up her jug and stated her errand, proposing that the cow should be milked a trifle earlier in order to suit my convenience. The man good-naturedly replied that, as far as the matter concerned himself, he was agreeable enough, but that the cow was not so easily to be put out of her way. She was milked regularly as clockwork at a quarter to five, the clock had only just struck four; he might leave his work and take her home, but not a drop of milk would she give before the proper time! Leaving our jug, we roamed about this little paradise, unwilling to quit a scene of unblemished beauty. A more bewitching spot I do not recall; and it seemed entirely shut off from the world, on all sides, unbroken quiet, nothing to mar the exquisiteness of emerald turf, glossy foliage of orange and lemon trees, silvery olive in striking contrast, and above, a cloudless sky. In the heart of a primeval forest we could not feel more alone.

The thought occurred to me how perfect were such a holiday resort could a clean little lodging

be found near! With some attention to cleanliness and sanitation, the little hotel at St. Martin du Var might satisfy the unfastidious. I am bound to admit that in French phrase it leaves much to desire.

My host gave me a good deal of interesting information about the place and the people. Excellent communal schools with lay teachers of both sexes have been opened under French régime; and the village of five hundred and odd souls has, of course, its Mairie, Hôtel de Ville, and Gendarmerie, governing itself after the manner of French villages.

Whilst the ladies of the house chatted with me they knitted away at socks and stockings, in coarse, bright-coloured wool. Such articles are never bought, the home-made substitute being much more economical in the end. As an instance of the solid comfort of these apparently frugal folks, let me mention their homespun linen sheets. My hostess showed me some coarse bed-linen lately woven for her in the village. Calico sheets, she said, were much cheaper, but she preferred this durable home-spun even at three times the price. An old woman in the village still plied the loom, working up neighbours' materials at three francs a day. The flax has to be purchased also, so that the homespun sheet is a

luxury; "and at the same time," the housewife added, "a work of charity. This poor old woman lives by her loom. It is a satisfaction to help her to a mouthful of bread."

The moon had risen when I took leave, hostess, little daughter, and sister all accompanying me to the station, reiterating their wish to see me again. Nothing, indeed, would have been pleasanter than to idle away weeks amid this adorable scenery and these charming people. But life is short and France is immense. The genially uttered *au revoir* becomes too often a mere figure of speech.

I add, by the way, that the little daughter, now trotting daily to the village school, is sure to have a handsome dowry by and by. Four thousand pounds is no unusual portion of a rich peasant's daughter in these regions. As an old resident at Nice informed me, "The peasants are richer than the *bourgeoisie*"—as they deserve to be, seeing their self-denial and thrift.

XII

PESSICARZ AND THE SUICIDES' CEMETERY

PESSICARZ AND THE SUICIDES' CEMETERY

PESSICARZ is a hamlet not mentioned in either French or English guide-books; yet the drive thither is far more beautiful than the regulation excursions given in tourists' itineraries. The road winds in corkscrew fashion above the exquisite bay and city, gleaming as if built of marble, amid scenes of unbroken solitude. Between groves of veteran olives and rocks rising higher and higher, we climb for an hour and a half, then leaving behind us the wide panorama of Nice, Cimiez, the sea, and villa-dotted hills, take a winding inland road, as beautiful as can be imagined. Here, nestled amid chestnut woods, lay the little farm I had come to see, consisting of three hectares let at a rent of five hundred francs (between seven and eight acres, rented at twenty pounds a year), the products being shared between owner and tenant. This modified system of *métayage* or half profits is common here, and certainly affords a stepping-stone to better things. By dint of uncompromising economy, the metayer may ultimately become a small owner.

The farmhouse was substantially built and occupied by both landlord and tenant, the latter with his family living on the ground floor. This arrangement probably answers two purposes, economy is effected, and fraud prevented on the part of the metayer. Pigs and poultry are noisy animals, and if a dishonest tenant wanted to smuggle any of these away by night, they would certainly betray him. The housewife, in the absence of her husband, received me very kindly. I was of course introduced by a neighbour, who explained my errand, and she at once offered to show me round. She was a sturdy, good-natured-looking woman, very well-dressed and speaking French fairly. The first thing she did was to show me her poultry, of which she was evidently very proud. This she accomplished by calling out in a loud voice, "Poules, poules, poules" ("chickens, chickens, chickens"), as if addressing children, whereupon they came fluttering out of the chestnut woods, fifty or more, some of fine breed. These fowls are kept for laying, and not for market, the eggs being sent daily into Nice. She then asked me indoors, the large kitchen being on one side of the door, the outhouses on the other. Beyond the kitchen was a large bed-room, her children, she explained, sleeping upstairs. Both rooms were smoke-dried to the

colour of mahogany, unswept and very untidy, but the good woman seemed quite sensible of these disadvantages and apologized on account of narrow space. A large supply of clothes hung upon pegs in the bed-chamber, and it possessed also a very handsome old upright clock. The kitchen, besides stores of cooking utensils, had a stand for best china, and on the walls were numerous unframed pictures. I mention these trifling details to show that even among the poorer peasant farmers something is found for ornament; they do not live as Zola would have us believe, for sordid gains alone.

We next visited the pigs, of which she possessed about a dozen in three separate styes. These are fed only upon grain and the kitchen wash supplied from hotels; but she assured me that the disgusting story I had heard at Nice was true. There are certain pork-rearing establishments in the department at which carrion is purchased and boiled down for fattening pigs. My hostess seemed quite alive to the unwholesomeness of such a practice, and we had a long talk about pigs, of which I happen to know something; that they are dirt-loving animals is quite a mistake; none more thoroughly enjoy a good litter of clean straw. I was glad to find this good woman entirely of the same opinion. She

informed me with evident satisfaction that fresh straw was always thrown down on one side of the piggery at night, and that the animals always selected it for repose.

The first lot were commodiously housed, but I reasoned with her with regard to the other two, the pig-styes being mere caverns without light or air, and the poor creatures grunting piteously to be let out. She told me that they were always let out at sundown, and heard what I had to say about pigs requiring air, let us hope to some purpose. Certainly, departmental professors have an uphill task before them in out-of-the-way regions. These poor people are said to be extremely frugal as a rule, but too apt to squander their years' savings at a paternal fête, wedding or any other festivity. Generations must elapse ere they are raised to the level of the typical French peasant. On the score of health they may compare favourably with any race. A fruit and vegetable diet seems sufficient in this climate. Besides her poultry and pigs my farmeress had not much to show me; but a plot of flowers for market, a little corn, and a few olive trees added grist to the mill. On the whole, want of comfort, cleanliness, and order apart, I should say that even such a condition contrasts favourably with that of an English agricultural labourer. Without doubt, were we to

inquire closely into matters, we should discover a sum of money invested or laid by for future purchases utterly beyond the reach of a Suffolk ploughman.

Just below the little farm I visited a philanthropic experiment interesting to English visitors. This was an agricultural orphanage founded by an Englishman two years before, seventeen waifs and strays having been handed over to him by the Municipal Council of Nice. The education of the poor little lads is examined once a year by a school inspector, in other respects the protégés are left to their new patron. Here they are taught household and farm work, fruit and flower culture, the business of the dairy, carpentering, and other trades; being afterwards placed out. I question whether an English Board of Guardians would so readily hand over seventeen workhouse lads to a foreigner, but it is to be hoped that the Niçois authorities will have no reason to regret their confidence. The boys do no work on Sundays, and once a year have a ten days' tramp in the country; the buildings are spacious and airy, but I was sorry to see a plank-bed used as a punishment. Indeed, I should say that the system pursued savours too much of the military. Here, be it remembered, no juvenile criminals are under restraint, only foundlings guilty of burdening

society. Whether this school exists still I know not.

Very different was the impression produced by the State Horticultural College recently opened at Antibes.

Around the lovely little bay the country still remains pastoral and unspoiled; a mile or two from the railway station and we are in the midst of rural scenes, tiny farms border the road, patches of corn, clover, vineyard, and flower-garden—flowers form the chief harvest of these sea-board peasants—orange, lemon and olive groves with here and there a group of palms, beyond these the violet hills and dazzling blue sea, such is the scenery, and could a decent little lodging be found in its midst, the holiday resort were perfect.

One drawback to existence is the treatment of animals. As I drove towards the college a countryman passed with a cart and pair of horses, the hindmost had two raw places on his haunches as large as a penny piece. I hope and believe that in England such an offender would have got seven days' imprisonment. The Italians, as we all know, have no feeling for animals, and the race here is semi-Italian—wholly so, if we may judge by physiognomy and complexion.

Until the foundation of the Horticultural

College here, the only one in existence on French soil was that of Versailles. Whilst farm-schools have been opened in various parts of the country, and special branches have their separate institutions, the teaching of horticulture remained somewhat in abeyance. Forestry is studied at Nancy, husbandry in general at Rennes, Grignan, and Amiens, the culture of the vine at Montpellier, drainage and irrigation at Quimperlé, all these great schools being made accessible to poorer students by means of scholarships.

In no other region of France could a Horticultural College be so appropriately placed as in the department of the Alpes Maritimes. It is not only one vast flower-garden, but at the same time a vast conservatory, the choice flowers exported for princely tables in winter being all reared under glass. How necessary, then, that every detail of this delightful and elaborate culture should be taught the people, whose mainstay it is, a large proportion being as entirely dependent upon flowers as the honey bee! Here, and in the neighbourhood of Nice, they are cultivated for market and exportation, not for perfume distilleries as at Grasse.

The State School of Antibes was created by the Minister of Agriculture in 1891, and is so unlike anything of the kind in England that a

brief description will be welcome. The first point to be noted is its essentially democratic spirit. When did a farm-labourer's son among ourselves learn any more of agriculture than his father or fellow-workmen could teach him? At Antibes, as in the numerous farm-schools (*fermes-écoles*) now established throughout France, the pupils are chiefly recruited from the peasant class.

How, will it be asked, can a small tenant farmer or owner of three or four acres afford to lose his son's earnings as soon as he quits school, much less to pay even a small sum for his education? The difficulty is met thus: in the first place, the yearly sum for board, lodging and teaching is reduced to the minimum, viz. five hundred francs a year; in the second, large numbers of scholarships are open to pupils who have successfully passed the examination of primary schools, and whose parents can prove their inability to pay the fees. No matter how poor he may be, the French peasant takes a long look ahead. He makes up his mind to forfeit his son's help or earnings for a year or two in view of the ulterior advantage. A youth having studied at Antibes, would come out with instruction worth much more than the temporary loss of time and money. That parents do reason in this way is self-evident. On the occasion of my visit, of the twenty-seven students

by far the larger proportion were exhibitioners, sons of small owners or tenants. Lads are admitted from fourteen years and upwards, and must produce the certificate of primary studies, answering to that of our Sixth Standard, or pass an entrance examination. The school is under State supervision, the teaching staff consisting of certificated professors. The discipline is of the simplest, yet, I was assured, quite efficacious. If a lad, free scholar or otherwise, misbehaves himself, he is called before the director and warned that a second reprimand only will be given, the necessity of a third entailing expulsion. No more rational treatment could be devised.

Besides practical teaching in the fields and gardens, consisting as yet of only twenty-five hectares, or nearly sixty acres, a somewhat bewildering course of study is given. The list of subjects begins well. First, a lad is here taught his duties as the head of a family, a citizen, and a man of business. Then come geography, history, arithmetic, book-keeping, trigonometry, linear drawing, mechanics, chemistry, physics, natural history, botany, geology, *agrologie*, or the study of soils, irrigation, political economy. Whilst farming generally is taught, the speciality of the school is fruit and flower culture. A beau-

tiful avenue of palm and orange trees leads from the road to the block of buildings, the director's house standing just outside. I was fortunate in finding this gentleman at home, and he welcomed me with the courtesy, I may say cordiality, I have ever received from professors of agriculture and practical farmers in France.

We immediately set out for our survey, my companion informing me, to my surprise, that the gardens I now gazed on so admiringly formed a mere wilderness a few years ago, that is to say, until their purchase by the State. The palm and orange trees had been brought hither and transplanted, everything else had sprung up on the roughly-cleared ground. Palm trees are reared on the school lands for exportation to Holland, there, of course, to be kept under glass; ere long the exportation of palms and orange trees will doubtless become as considerable as that of hothouse flowers.

I was shown magnificent palms fifteen years old, and nurseries of tiny trees, at this stage of their existence unlovely as birch brooms. Hitherto, majestic although its appearance, the palm of the Riviera has not produced dates. The director is devoting much time to this subject, and hopes ere long to gather his crop.

As we passed between the orange trees, here

and there the deep green glossy fruit turning to gold, I heard the same report as at Pessicarz. At neither place can the lads resist helping themselves to the unripe oranges. Sour apples and green oranges seem quite irresistible to hobbledehoys. The trees were laden with fruit, and, unless blown off by a storm, the crop would be heavy. An orange tree on an average produces to the value of two hundred francs.

I was next taken to the newly-created vineyards, some consisting of French grafts on American stock, others American plants; but vines are capricious, and one vineyard looked sickly enough, although free from parasites. The climate did not suit it, that was all.

But by far the most important and interesting crops here are the hothouse flowers. I fancy few English folks think of glass-houses in connection with the Riviera. Yet the chief business of horticulturists during a large portion of the year is in the conservatory. Brilliant as is the winter sun, the nights are cold and the fall of temperature after sundown extremely rapid. Only the hardier flowers, therefore, remain out of doors.

I was now shown the glass-houses being made ready for the winter. All the choice flowers, roses, carnations and others, sent to Paris, London, Berlin, St. Petersburg, are grown under glass.

Roses thus cultivated will bring four francs per dozen to the grower; I was even told of choicest kinds sold from the conservatories at a franc each. It may easily be conceived how profitable is this commerce, destined without doubt to become more so as the culture of flowers improves. New varieties are ever in demand for royal or millionaires' tables, bridal bouquets, funeral wreaths. I was told the discoverer or creator of a blue carnation would make his fortune. I confess this commercial aspect of flowers takes something from their poetry. Give me a cottager's plot of sweet-williams and columbine instead of the floral paragon evolved for the gratification of the curious! As we strolled about we came upon groups of students at work. All politely raised their hats when we passed, and by their look and manner might have been taken for young gentlemen.

A great future doubtless awaits this delightfully placed Horticultural School. Whilst the object primarily aimed at by the State is the education of native gardeners and floriculturists, other results may be confidently expected. No rule keeps out foreigners, and just as our Indian candidates for the Forestry service prepare themselves at Nancy, so intending fruit-growers in Tasmania will in time betake themselves to Antibes. A colonial,

as well as an international element is pretty sure to be added. French subjects beyond seas will certainly avail themselves of privileges not to be had at home, carrying away with them knowledge of the greatest service in tropical France. Horticulture as a science must gain greatly by such a centre, new methods being tried, improved systems put into practice. In any case, the department may fairly be congratulated on its recent acquisition, one, alas, we have to set against very serious drawbacks! In these intensely hot and glaring days of mid-October, the only way of enjoying life is to betake oneself to a sailing-boat. Few English folks realize the torture of mosquito-invaded nights on the Riviera. As to mosquito curtains, they afford a remedy ofttimes worse than the disease, keeping out what little air is to be had and admitting, here and there, one mosquito of slenderer bulk and more indomitable temper than the rest. After two or three utterly sleepless nights the most enthusiastic traveller will sigh for grey English skies, pattering drops and undisturbed sleep. At sea, you may escape both blinding glare and mosquito bites. A boat is also the only means of realizing the beauty of the coast. Most beautiful is the roundabout sail from Cannes to the Île St. Marguérite: I say roundabout, because, if the wind is adverse, the boatmen have

to make a circuit, going out of their course to the length of four or five miles. Every tourist knows the story of the Iron Mask; few are perhaps aware that in the horrible prison in which Louis XIV. kept him for seventeen years, Protestants were also incarcerated, their only crime being that they would not perjure themselves, in other words, feign certain beliefs to please the tyrant.

At the present time the cells adjoining the historic dungeon of the Masque de Fer are more cheerfully occupied. Soldiers are placed there for slight breaches of discipline, their confinement varying from twelve hours to a few days. We heard two or three occupants gaily whiling away the time by singing patriotic songs, under the circumstances the best thing they could do. Lovely indeed was the twenty minutes' sail back to Cannes, the sea, deep indigo, the sky, intensest blue, white villas dotting the green hills, far away the violet mountains. When we betake ourselves to the railway or carriage road, we must make one comparison very unfavourable to English landscape. Here building stone, as bricks and mortar with us, is daily and hourly invading pastoral scenes, but the hideous advertizing board is absent in France. We do not come upon monster advertisements of antibilious pills, hair dye, or soap amid olive groves and vineyards. Let us

hope that the vulgarization permitted among ourselves will not be imitated by our neighbours.

In 1789 Arthur Young described the stretch of country between Fréjus and Cannes as a desert, "not one mile in twenty cultivated." Will Europe and America, with the entire civilized world, furnish valetudinarians in sufficient numbers to fill the hotels, villas, and boarding houses now rising at every stage of the same way? The matter seems problematic, yet last winter accommodation at Nice barely sufficed for the influx of visitors.

Nice is the most beautiful city in France, I am tempted to say the most beautiful city I ever beheld. It is the last in which I should choose to live or even winter.

Site, sumptuosity, climate, vegetation here attain their acme; so far, indeed, Nice may be pronounced flawless. During a certain portion of the year, existence, considered from the physical and material point of view, were surely here perfect. When we come to the social and moral aspect of the most popular health resort in Europe, a very different conclusion is forced upon us.

Blest in itself, Nice is cursed in its surroundings. So near is that plague spot of Europe, Monte Carlo, that it may almost be regarded as a suburb. For a few pence, in half-an-hour, you

may transport yourself from a veritable earthly Paradise to what can only be described as a gilded Inferno. Unfortunately evil is more contagious than good. Certain medical authorities aver that the atmosphere of Mentone used to be impregnated with microbes of phthisis; the germs of moral disease infecting the immediate neighbourhood of Nice are far more appalling. Nor are symptoms wanting of the spread of that moral disease. The municipal council of this beautiful city, like Esau, had just sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. They had conceded the right of gambling to the Casino, the proprietors purchasing the right by certain outlays in the way of improvements, a new public garden, and so on. As yet roulette and rouge-et-noir are not permitted at Nice, the gambling at present carried on being apparently harmless. It is in reality even more insidious, being a stepping-stone to vice, a gradual initiation into desperate play. Just as addiction to absinthe is imbibed by potions quite innocuous in the beginning, so the new Casino at Nice schools the gamester from the outset, slowly and by infinitesimal degrees preparing him for ruin, dishonour and suicide.

The game played is called *Petits Chevaux*, and somewhat resembles our nursery game of steeplechase. The stakes are only two francs, but as

there are eight to each horse, and you may take as many as you please, it is quite easy to lose several hundred francs in one evening—or, for the matter of that, one afternoon. Here, as at Monte Carlo, the gambling rooms remain open from noon till midnight. The buildings are on an imposing scale: reading rooms, a winter garden, concerts, entertainments of various kinds blinding the uninitiated to the real attraction of the place, namely, the miniature horses spinning around the tables. Already—I write of October—eager crowds stood around, and we heard the incessant chink of falling coin. This modified form of gambling is especially dangerous to the young. Parents, who on no account would let their children toss a five-franc piece on to the tables of Monte Carlo, see no harm in watching them play at *petits chevaux*. They should, first of all, make a certain ghastly pilgrimage I will now relate.

Monaco does not as yet, politically speaking, form a part of French territory; from a geographical point of view we are obliged so to regard it. Thus French geographers and writers of handbooks include the tiny principality, which for the good of humanity, let us hope, may ere long be swallowed up by an earthquake—or moralized! The traveller then is advised to take

train to Monaco, and, arrived at the little station, whisper his errand in the cab-driver's ear, "To the suicides' cemetery."

For the matter of that, it is an easy walk enough for all who can stand the burning sun and glare of white walls and buildings. Very lovely, too, is the scene as we slowly wind upwards, the road bordered with aloes and cypresses; above, handsome villas standing amid orange groves and flowers; below, the sparkling sea.

A French cemetery, with its wreaths of beadwork and artificial violets, has ever a most depressing appearance. That of Monaco is like any other, we find the usual magnificence, and usual tinsel. Many beautiful trees, shrubs, and flowers, however, relieve the gloom, and every inch is exquisitely kept.

Quite apart from this vast burial-ground, on the other side of the main entrance, is a small enclosure, walled in and having a gate of open ironwork always locked. Here, in close proximity to heaps of garden rubbish, broken bottles and other refuse, rest the suicides of Monte Carlo, buried by the parish gravedigger, without funeral and without any kind of religious ceremony. Each grave is marked by an upright bit of wood, somewhat larger than that by which gardeners mark their seeds, and on which is painted a

number, nothing more. Apart from these, are stakes driven into the ground which mark as yet unappropriated spots. The indescribable dreariness of the scene is heightened by two monumental stones garlanded with wreaths and surrounded by flowers. The first records the memory of a young artisan, and was raised by his fellow-workmen; the second commemorates brotherly and sisterly affection. Both suicides were driven to self-murder by play. The remainder are mere numbers. There are poor gamesters as well as rich, and it is only or chiefly these who are put into the ground here. The bodies of rich folks' relatives, if identified, are immediately removed, and, by means of family influence, interred with religious rites. Many suicides are buried at Nice and Mentone, but the larger proportion, farther off still. Not to descant further on this grim topic, let me now say something about Monte Carlo itself.

Never anywhere was snare more plainly set in the sight of any bird. There is little in the way of amusement that you do not get for nothing here, a beautiful pleasure-ground, reading-rooms as luxurious and well-supplied as those of a West End club, one of the best orchestras in Europe, and all without cost of a farthing.

The very lavishness arouses suspicion in the

minds of the wary. Why should we be supplied, not only with every English newspaper we ever heard of, but with *Punch*, *Truth*, and similar publications to boot? Why should Germans, Russians, Dutch, every other European nation, receive treatment equally generous? Again, to be able to sit down at elegant writing-tables and use up a quire of fine notepaper and a packet of envelopes to match, if we chose, how is all this managed? The concerts awaken a feeling of even intenser bewilderment. Not so much as a penny are we allowed to pay for a programme, to say nothing of the trained musicians. Where is the compensation of such liberality?

The gambling tables, crowded even at three o'clock on an October afternoon, answer our question. The season begins later, but gamblers cannot wait. "Faites le jeu, messieurs; messieurs, faites le jeu," is already heard from noon to midnight, and the faster people ruin themselves and send a pistol shot through their heads, the faster others take their place. It is indeed melancholy to reflect how many once respectable lives, heads of families, even wives and mothers, are being gradually lured on to bankruptcy and suicide.

In cruellest contrast to the moral degradation fostered below, is the enormous cathedral, at the

time of my visit in course of erection directly above the gambling rooms. The millions of francs expended on this sumptuous basilica were supplied by the proprietors of the Casino and the Prince of Monaco. Nothing can strike the stranger with a stronger sense of incongruity—a church rising from the very heart of a Pandemonium!

Monaco is a pretty, toy-like, Lilliputian kingdom compared with which the smallest German principality of former days was enormous. Curiously enough, whilst Monte Carlo is peopled with gamesters, the only tenants of Monaco seem to be priests, nuns and their pupils. The miniature capital, state and kingdom in one, consists chiefly of convents and seminaries, and wherever you go you come upon these Jesuit fathers with their carefully-guarded troops of lads in uniform. A survey of the entire principality of Monaco, Monte Carlo included, requires about a quarter of an hour. Nowhere, surely, on the face of the civilized globe is so much mischief contained in so small a space. Fortunately, the poisonous atmosphere of the Casino does not seem to affect the native poor. Everywhere we are struck by the thrifty, sober, hard-working population; beggars or ragged, wretched-looking creatures are very rare. If the authorities of the Alpes Maritimes have set

themselves to put down vagrancy, they have certainly succeeded.

Nice is a home for the millionaire and the working man. The intermediate class is not wanted. Visitors are expected to have money, are welcomed on that account, and if they have to look to pounds, shillings, and pence, had much better remain at home.

Woe betide the needy invalid sent thither in search of sunshine! Sunshine is indeed a far more expensive luxury on the Riviera than we imagine, seeing that only rooms with a north aspect are cheap, and a sunless room is much more comfortless and unwholesome than a well-warmed one, no matter its aspect, in England. The only cheap commodity, one unfortunately we cannot live upon, is the bouquet. In October, that is to say, before the arrival of winter visitors, flowers are to be had for the asking; on the market-place an enormous bouquet of tuberoses, violets, carnations, myrtle, priced at two or three francs, the price in Paris being twenty. Fruit also I found cheap, figs fourpence a dozen, and other kinds in proportion. This market is the great sight of Nice, and seen on a cloudless day—indeed it would be difficult to see it on any other—is a glory of colour of which it is impossible to give the remotest notion. I was somewhat taken aback to

find Sunday less observed here as a day of rest than in any other French town I know, and not many French towns are unknown to me. The flower and fruit markets were crowded, drapers', grocers', booksellers' shops open all day long, traffic unbroken as usual. I should have imagined that a city, for generations taken possession of by English visitors, would by this time have fallen into our habit of respecting Sunday alike in the interests of man and beast. Of churches, both English and American, there is no lack. Let us hope that the Protestant clergy will turn their attention to this subject. Let us hope also that the entire English-speaking community will second their efforts in this direction. Further, I will put in a good word for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals founded at Nice some years since, and sadly in need of funds. The Society is backed up by the Government in accordance with the admirable Loi Grammont, but, as is the case with local societies in England, requires extraneous help. Surely rich English valetudinarians will not let this humane work stand still, seeing, as they must do daily, the urgent necessity of such interference! From the windows of a beautiful villa on the road to Villefranche, I saw baskets of chickens brought in from Italy, the half of which were dead or dying

from suffocation. As the owner of the villa said, "Not even self-interest teaches this Italian humanity." By packing his fowls so as to afford them breathing space, he would double his gains. The habit of cruelty is too inveterate. My host assured me that large numbers of poultry sent across the frontier are suffocated on the way.

Horrible also is the pigeon-shooting at Monte Carlo. Hundreds of these wretched birds are killed for sport every day during the winter. The wounded or escaped fly back after a while to be shot at next day.

The word "villa" calls for comment. Such a designation is appropriate here. The palatial villas of Nice, standing amid orangeries and palm groves, are worthy of their Roman forerunners. For the future I shall resent the term as applied in England to eight-roomed, semi-detached constructions, poorly built, and with a square yard of flower-bed in front. Many of the Niçois villas are veritable palaces, and what adds to their sumptuousness is the indoor greenery, dwarf palms, india-rubber trees, and other handsome evergreens decorating corridor and landing-places. The English misnomer has, nevertheless, compensations in snug little kitchen and decent servant's bedroom. I looked over a handsome villa here, type, I imagine, of the rest. The

servants' bedrooms were mere closets with openings on to a dark corridor, no windows, fireplace, cupboard, or any convenience. The kitchen was a long, narrow room, after the manner of French kitchens, with space by the window for two or three chairs. I ventured to ask the mistress of the house where the servants sat when work was done. Her answer was suggestive—

"They have no time to sit anywhere."

It will be seen that our grey skies and mean-looking dwellings have compensations.

XIII

GUEST OF FARMER AND MILLER

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"NINE hours' rolling at anchor" was Arthur Young's experience of a Channel passage in 1787, and on the return journey he was compelled to wait three days for a wind. Two years later, what is in our own time a delightful little pleasure cruise of one hour and a quarter, the journey from Dover to Calais occupied fourteen hours.

We might suppose from the hundreds of thousands of English travellers who yearly cross the Manche, that Picardy, Artois, and French Flanders would overflow with them, that we should hear English speech wherever we go, and find ourselves amid more distinctly English surroundings than even in Switzerland or Norway; but no such thing. From the moment I quitted Boulogne to that of my departure from Calais, having made the round by way of Hesdin, Arras, Vitry-en-Artois, Douai, Lille, St. Omer, I no more encountered an English tourist than on the Causses of the Lozère a few years before. Many years later, on going over much of the same ground, with a halt at Étaples and Le Touquet, it was much the same. Yet such a tour, costing

so little as regards money, time and fatigue, teems with interest of very varied and unlooked-for kind.

Every inch of ground is historic to begin with, and has contributed its page to Anglo-French annals or English romance. We may take the little railway from Hesdin to Abbeville, traversing the forest of Crécy, and drive across the corn-fields to Agincourt. We may stop at Montreuil, which now looks well, not only "on the map," but from the railway carriage, reviving our recollections of Tristram Shandy. At Douai we find eighty English boys playing cricket and football under the eye of English Benedictine monks—their college being a survival of the persecutions of Good Queen Bess.

And to come down from history and romance to astounding prose, we find, a few years ago, Roubaix, a town of 114,000 souls, that is to say, a fourth of the population of Lyons—a town whose financial transactions with the Bank of France exceed those of Rheims, Nîmes, Toulouse, or Montpellier, represented by a man of the people, the important functions of mayor being filled by the proprietor of a humble *estaminet* and vendor of newspapers, character and convictions only having raised the Socialist leader to such a post!

In rural districts there is also much to learn. Peasant property exists more or less in every part of France, but we are here more especially in presence of agriculture on a large scale. In the Pas-de-Calais and the Nord we find high farming in right good earnest, holdings of from ten to fifteen hundred acres conducted on the footing of large industrial concerns, capital, science and enterprise being alike brought to bear upon the cultivation of the soil and by private individuals.

I travelled from Boulogne to Hesdin, in time for the first beautiful effect of spring-tide flower and foliage. The blackthorn and pear trees were already in full blossom, and the elm, poplar and chestnut just bursting into leaf. Everything was very advanced, and around the one-storeyed, white-washed cottages the lilacs showed masses of bloom, field and garden being a month ahead of less favoured years.

Near Étaples the wide estuary of the Canche showed clear, lake-like sheets of water amid the brilliant greenery; later are passed sandy downs with few trees or breaks in the landscape. This part of France should be seen during the budding season; of itself unpicturesque, it is yet beautified by the early foliage. Hesdin is an ancient, quiet little town on the Canche, with tanneries making

pictures—and smells—by the river, unpaved streets, and a very curious bit of civic architecture, the triple-storeyed portico of the Hôtel de Ville. Its 7000 and odd souls were soon to have their museum, the nucleus being a splendid set of tapestries representing the battle of Agincourt, in loveliest shades of subdued blue and grey. The little inn is very clean and comfortable; for five francs a day you obtain the services of the master, who is cook; the mistress, who is chambermaid; and the daughters of the house, who wait at table. Such, at least, was my experience.

My errand was to the neighbouring village of Hauteville-Caumont, whither I drove one afternoon. Quitting the town in a north-easterly direction, we enter one of those long, straight French roads that really seem as if they would never come to an end. The solitude of the scene around is astonishing to English eyes. For miles we only meet two road-menders and an itinerant glazier. On either side, far as the glance could reach, stretches the chessboard landscape—an expanse oceanic in its vastness of green and brown, fields of corn and clover alternating with land prepared for beetroot and potatoes. The extent and elevation of this plateau, formerly covered with forests, explain the excessive dry-

ness of the climate. Bitter indeed must be the wintry blast, torrid the rays of summer here. As we proceed we see little breaks in the level uniformity, plains of apple-green and chocolate-brown; the land dips here and there, showing tiny combes and bits of refreshing wood. The houses, whether of large landowner, functionary or peasant, are invariably one-storeyed, the white walls, brown tiles, or thatched roof having an old-fashioned, rustic effect. One might suppose earthquakes were common from this habit of living on the ground floor. The dryness of the climate doubtless obviates risk of damp. Much more graceful are the little orchards of these homesteads than the mathematically planted cider apples seen here in all stages of growth. Even the blossoms of such trees later on cannot compare with the glory of an orchard, in the old acceptance of the word, having reached maturity in the natural way. Certain portions of rural France are too geometrical. That I must admit.

Exquisitely clean, to use a farmer's expression, are these sweeps of corn and ploughed land, belonging to different owners, yet apparently without division. Only boundary stones at intervals mark the limits. Here we find no infinitesimal subdivision and no multiplicity of crops. Wheat, clover, oats form the triennial course, other crops

being rye, potatoes, Swede turnips, sainfoin and the *œillette* or oil poppy. The cider apple is also an important product.

I found my friend's friend at home, and after a chat with madame and her daughter, we set out for our round of inspection. This gentleman farmed his own land, a beautifully cultivated estate of several hundred acres; here and there a neighbour's field dovetailed into his own, but for the greater part lying compactly together. The first object that attracted my notice was a weather-beaten old windmill—sole survivor of myriads formerly studding the country. This antiquated structure might have been the identical one slashed at by Don Quixote. Iron grey, dilapidated, solitary, it rose between green fields and blue sky, like a lighthouse in mid-ocean. These mills are still used for crushing rye, the mash being mixed with roots for cattle, and the straw used here, as elsewhere, for *liage* or tying up wheatsheaves. The tenacity of this straw makes it very valuable for such purposes.

Corn, rye and sainfoin were already very advanced, all here testifying to highly scientific farming; and elsewhere roots were being sown. The soil is prepared by a process called *marnage*, *i. e.* dug up to the extent of three feet, the *marne* or clayey soil being brought to the sur-

face. A very valuable manure is that of the scoria or residue of dephosphated steel, formerly thrown away as worthless, but now largely imported from Hungary for agricultural purposes. Nitrate is also largely used to enrich the soil. Sixty years ago the Pas-de-Calais possessed large forests. Here at Caumont vast tracts have been cleared and brought under culture since that time. These denuded plateaux, at a considerable elevation above the sea-level, are naturally very dry and very cold in winter, the climate being gradually modified by the almost total absence of trees. Wisely has the present Government interdicted further destruction; forests are now created instead, and we find private individuals planting instead of hacking down. Lucerne is not much cultivated, and my host told me an interesting fact concerning it; in order to grow lucerne, farmers must procure seeds of local growers. Seeds from the south of France do not produce robust plants.

The purple-flowered poppy, cultivated for the production of oil, must form a charming crop in summer, and is a most important product. I was assured that oil procured from crushed seeds is the only kind absolutely free from flavour, and as such superior even to that of olives. Of equal importance is the cider apple.

The economic results of war are curiously exemplified here. During the war of 1871 German troops were stationed in the neighbouring department of the Somme, and there acquired the habit of drinking cider. So agreeable was found this drink that cider apples are now largely exported to Germany, and just as a Frenchman now demands his Bock at a café, so in his Biergarten the German calls for cider.

My host informed me that all his own apples, grown for commerce, went over the northern frontier. Cider is said to render the imbiber gout-proof and rheumatism-proof, but requires a long apprenticeship to render it palatable. The profits of an apple orchard are threefold. There is the crop gathered in October, which will produce in fair seasons 150 francs per hectare, and the two grass crops, apple trees not hurting the pasture.

The labourer's harvest here are his potato-fed pigs. In our walks we came upon men and women sowing potatoes on their bit of hired land; for the most part their bit of land is tilled on Sundays, a neighbour's horse being hired or borrowed for the purpose. Thus neither man nor beast rest on the seventh day, and as a natural consequence church-going gradually falls into abeyance. My host deplored this habit of turn-

ing Sunday into a veritable *corvée* for both human beings and cattle, but said that change of system must be very slow.

On the whole, the condition of the agricultural labourer here contrasts very unfavourably with that of the peasant owner described elsewhere.

The same drawbacks exist as in England. Land for the most part being held by large owners, accommodation for poorer neighbours is insufficient. Many able-bodied workmen migrate to the towns, simply because they cannot get houses to live in; such one-storeyed dwellings as exist have an uncared-for look, neither are the village folks so well dressed as in regions of peasant property. In fact, I should say, after a very wide experience, that peasant property invariably uplifts and non-propertied labour drags down. This seems to me a conclusion mathematically demonstrable.

Mayor of his commune, my host was a man of progress and philanthropy in the widest sense of the word. He had lately brought about the opening of an infant school here, and dwelt on the beneficial results; children not being admitted to the communal schools under the age of seven, were otherwise thrown on the streets all day. Infant schools are generally found in the larger com-

munes. Intersecting my host's vast stretches of field and ploughed land lay the old strategic road from Rouen to St. Omer, a broad band of dazzling white thrown across the tremendous panorama. An immense plain is spread before us as a map, now crudely brilliant in hue, two months later to show blending gold and purple. Vast, too, the views obtained on the homeward drive. Over against Hesdin rises its forest—holiday ground of rich and poor, as yet undiscovered by the tourist. From this friendly little town a charming woodland journey may be made by the railway now leading through the forest of Crécy to Abbeville.

Between Hesdin and Arras the geometrically planted cider apple trees and poplars growing in parallel lines are without beauty, but by the railway are bits of waste ground covered with cowslip, wind flowers, cuckoo-pint, and dandelion. On the top of lofty elms here and there are dark masses; these are the nests of the magpie, and apparently quite safe from molestation.

By the wayside we see evidences of peasant ownership on the most modest scale, women cutting their tiny patch of rye, as green food for cattle, sowing their potato field, or keeping a few sheep. Everywhere lilacs are in full bloom, and the pear and cherry trees burdened with blossom

as snow. Everything is a month ahead of ordinary years. I write of April 1893.

The Hôtel St. Pol at Arras looks, I should say, precisely as it did in Robespierre's time. The furniture certainly belongs to that epoch, sanitary arrangements have made little advance, and the bare staircases and floors do not appear as if they had been well swept, much less scoured, since the fall of the Bastille. It is a rambling, I should say rat-haunted, old place, but fairly quiet and comfortable, with civil men-servants and no kind of pretence.

Arras itself, that is to say its Petite Place, is a specimen of Renaissance architecture hardly to be matched even in France. The Flemish gables and Spanish arcades, not a vestige of modernization marring the effect, make a unique picture. Above all rises the first of those noble belfry towers met by the traveller on this round, souvenirs of civic rights hardly won and stoutly maintained. The first object looked for will be Robespierre's birthplace, an eminently respectable middle-class abode, now occupied by a personage almost as generally distasteful as that of the Conventionnel himself, namely, a process-server or bailiff. A bright little lad whom I interrogated on the way testified the liveliest interest in my quest, and would not lose sight of me till I had

discovered the right house. It is a yellow-walled, yellow-shuttered, symbolically atrabilious-looking place, with twenty-three front windows. Robespierre's parents must have been in decent circumstances when their son Maximilian was born, and perhaps the reverses of early life had no small share in determining his after career. Left an orphan in early life, he owed his education and start in life to charity. The fastidious, poetic, austere country lawyer, unlike his fellow-conventionnels, was no born orator. Thoughts that breathe and words that burn did not drop from his lips as from Danton's. His carefully prepared speeches, even in the apogee of his popularity, were often interrupted by the cry "Cut it short" or "Keep to the point." The exponent of Rousseau was ofttimes "long preaching," like St. Paul.

But there are early utterances of Robespierre's that constitute in themselves a revolution, when, for instance, in 1789 he pleaded for the admission of Jews, non-Catholics, and actors to political rights. "The Jews," he protested, "have been maligned in history. Their reputed vices arise from the ignominy into which they have been plunged." And although his later discourses breathe a spirit of frenzied vindictiveness, certain passages recall that "humane and spiritual



ARRAS, LA PETITE PLACE

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element" commented upon by Charles Nodier. This is especially noticeable in what is called his *discours-testament*, the speech delivered on the eve of Thermidor. At one moment, with positive ferocity, he lashes the memory of former friends and colleagues sent by himself to the guillotine; at another he dilates upon the virtue of magnanimity in lofty, Platonic strains.

With Danton's implacable foe it was indeed a case of "Roses, roses, all the way. Thus I enter, and thus I go." Twenty-four hours after that peroration he awaited his doom, an object of ruthless execration. And visitors are still occasionally shown in the Hôtel des Archives the table on which was endured his short but terrible retribution.

A public day school for girls exists at Arras, but the higher education of women—we must never lose sight of the fact—is sternly denounced by Catholic authorities. Lay schools and lay teachers for girls are not only unfashionable, they are immoral in the eyes of the orthodox.

The museum and public library, 40,000 and odd volumes, of this town of 26,000 souls are both magnificent and magnificently housed in the ancient Abbaye de St. Vaast, adjoining cathedral, bishopric and public garden.

Besides pictures, statuary, natural history and

archæological collections, occupying three storeys, is a room devoted exclusively to local talent and souvenirs. Among the numerous bequests of generous citizens is a collection of *faïence* lately left by a tradeswoman, whose portrait commemorates the deed. Some fine specimens of ancient tapestry of Arras, hence the name arras, chiefly in shades of grey and blue, and also specimens of the delicate hand-made Arras lace, are here. There is also a room of technical exhibits, chemicals and minerals used in the industrial arts, dyes, textiles.

Quite a third of the visitors thronging these sumptuous rooms were young recruits. A modern picture of Eustache St. Pierre and his companions, at the feet of Edward III and his kneeling Queen, evoked much admiration. . I heard one young soldier explaining the subject to a little group. There were also many family parties, and some blue blouses. How delightful such a place of resort—not so much in July weather, on this 9th of April one might fancy it harvest time!—but on bleak, rainy, uninviting days! One of the officials advised me to visit the recently erected Ecole des Beaux Arts at the other end of the town, which I did. I would here note the pride taken in their public collections by all concerned. This elderly man, most likely an old soldier,

seemed as proud of the museum as if it were his own especial property.

I was at once shown over the spacious, airy, well-kept building—school of art and conservatorium of music in one, both built, set on foot, and maintained by the municipality. Here youths and girls of all ranks can obtain a thorough artistic and musical training without a fraction of cost. The classes are held in separate rooms, and boys in addition learn modelling and mechanical drawing.

The school was opened four years ago, and already numbers eighty students of both sexes, girls meeting two afternoons a week, boys every evening. Arras also possesses an École Normale or large training school for female teachers.

On this brilliant Sunday afternoon, although many small shops were open, I noted the cessation of street traffic. Every one seemed abroad, and business at a standstill. All the newspaper kiosks were closed.

Next morning soon after eight o'clock I was off to Vitry-en-Artois for a day's farming. At the little station I was met by a friend's friend—a typical young Frenchman, gaiety itself, amiable, easy, all his faculties alert—and driven by him in a little English dogcart to the neighbouring village. Twenty-five minutes brought us to our

destination—house and model farm of a neighbour, upwards of twelve hundred acres, all cultivated on the most approved methods. Our host now took my young friend's reins, he seating himself behind, and we drove slowly over a large portion of the estate, taking a zigzag course across the fields. There are here three kinds of soil—dry, chalky and unproductive, rich loam, and light intermediate. In spite of the drought of the last few weeks, the crops are very luxuriant, and quite a month ahead of former seasons.

This estate of six hundred and odd hectares is a specimen of high farming on a large scale, such as I had never before witnessed in France. I do not exaggerate when I say that from end to end could not be discerned a single weed. Of course, the expense of cultivation on such a scale is very great, and hardly remunerative at the present price of wheat.

Sixty hectares, *i. e.* nearly 150 acres, are planted with wheat, and two-thirds of that superficies with beetroot. The young corn was as advanced as in June with us, some kinds of richer growth than others, and showing different shades of green, each tract absolutely weedless, and giving evidence of highest cultivation. Fourteen hectolitres[1] per hectare of corn is the average, forty the

[1] Hectolitre = 2 bushels 3 pecks.

maximum. Besides beetroot for sugar, clover and sainfoin are grown, little or no barley, and neither turnips nor mangel-wurzel.

The land is just now prepared for planting beetroot, by far the most important crop here, and on which I shall have much to say. Henceforth, indeed, the farming I describe may be called industrial, purely agricultural products being secondary.

On the importance of beetroot sugar it is hardly necessary to dwell at length. A few preliminary facts, however, may be acceptable. Up till the year 1812, cane sugar only was known in France; the discovery of beetroot sugar dates from the Continental blockade of that period. In 1885 the amount of raw sugar produced from beetroot throughout France was 90 millions of kilos.[1] In 1873 the sum-total had reached 400 millions. The consumption of sugar per head here is nevertheless one-third less than among ourselves.

We come now to see the results of fiscal regulation upon agriculture. Formerly duty was paid not upon the root itself but its product. This is now changed, and, the beetroot being taxed, the grower strives after that kind producing the largest percentage of saccharine matter. Hardly less important is the residue. The pulp of the

[1] Kilogramme = 2 lb. 3 oz.

crushed beetroot in these regions forms the staple food of cows, pigs and sheep. Mixed with chopped straw, it is stored for winter use in mounds by small cultivators, in enormous cellars constructed on purpose by large owners. Horses refuse to eat this mixture, which has a peculiar odour, scenting farm premises from end to end. The chief manure used is that produced on the farm and nitrates. On this especial estate dried fish from Sweden had been tried, and, as on the farm before mentioned, chalky land is dug to the depth of three feet, the better soil being put on the top. This is the process called *marnage*. We now drove for miles right across the wide stretches of young wheat and land prepared for beetroot. The wheels of our light cart, the host said, would do good rather than harm. Horse beans, planted a few weeks before, were well up; colza also was pretty forward. Pastures there were none. Although the cornfields were as clean as royal gardens we came upon parties of women, girls and boys hoeing here and there. The rows of young wheat showed as much uniformity as a newly-planted vineyard.

Ploughing and harrowing were being done chiefly by horses, only a few oxen being used. My host told me that his animals were never worked on Sundays. On week-days they remain

longer afield than with us, but a halt of an hour or two is made for food and rest at mid-day. Another crop to be mentioned is what is called *hivernage* or winter fodder, *i.e.* lentils planted between rows of rye, the latter being grown merely to protect the other. On my query as to the school attendance of boys and girls employed in agriculture, my host said that authorities are by no means rigid; at certain seasons of the year, indeed, they are not expected to attend. Among some large landowners we find tolerably conservative notions even in France. Over-education, they say, is unfitting the people for manual labour, putting them out of their place, and so forth.

Moles are not exterminated. "They do more good than harm," said my host, "and I like them." I had heard the same thing at Caumont, where were many mole-hills. Here and there, dove-tailed into these enormous fields, were small patches farmed by the peasants, rarely their own property. Their condition was described as neither that of prosperity nor want. "They get along." That was the verdict.

In our long drive across weedless corn and clover fields we came upon a small wood, a recent plantation of our host. Even this bit of greenery made a pleasant break in the uniform landscape. We then drove home, and inspected the premises

on foot. Everything was on a colossal scale, and trim as a Dutch interior. The vast collection of machinery included the latest French, English, Belgian and American inventions. Steam engines are fixtures, the consumption of coal being 160 tons yearly per 300 hectares.

We are thus brought face to face with the agriculture of the future, ancient methods and appliances being supplanted one by one, manual labour reduced to the minimum, the cultivation of the soil become purely mechanical. The idyllic element vanishes from rural life and all savours of Chicago! Stables and neat-houses were the perfection of cleanliness and airiness. Here for the first time I saw sheep stabled like cows and horses. Their quarters were very clean, and littered with fresh straw. They go afield for a portion of the day, but, as I have before mentioned, pastures are few and far between.

The enormous underground store-houses for beetroot, pulp and chopped straw were now almost empty. At midday, the oxen were led home and fell to their strange food with appetite, its moistness being undoubtedly an advantage in dry weather. The cart horses were being fed with boiled barley, and looked in first-rate condition. Indeed, all the animals seemed as happy and well-cared for as my host's scores upon scores of

pet birds. Birds, however, are capricious, and nothing would induce a beautiful green parrot to cry, "Vive la France" in my presence. After an animated breakfast—thoroughly French breakfast, the best of everything cooked and served in the best possible manner—we took leave, and my young friend drove me back to Vitry to call upon his own family.

M. D., senior, is a miller, and the family dwelling, which adjoins his huge water-mill, is very prettily situated on the Scarpe. We entered by a little wooden bridge running outside, a conservatory filled with exotics and ferns lending the place a fairy look. I never saw anything in rural France that more fascinated me than this water-mill with its crystal clear waters and surrounding foliage. M. D. with his three sons quitted their occupation as we drove up. Madame and her young daughter joined us in the cool salon, and we chatted pleasantly for a quarter of an hour.

I was much struck with the head of the family, an elderly man with blue eyes, fine features, and a thoughtful expression. He spoke sadly of the effect of American competition, and admitted that protection could offer but a mere palliative. Hitherto I had found a keenly protectionist bias among French agriculturists. Of England and

the English he spoke with much sympathy, although at this time we were as yet far from the Entente Cordiale. "C'est le plus grand peuple au monde" ("It is the greatest nation in the world"), he said.

Nothing could equal the ease and cordiality with which this charming family received me. The miller with his three elder sons had come straight from the mill. Well-educated gentlemen are not ashamed of manual labour in France. How I wished I could have spent days, nay weeks, in the neighbourhood of the water-mill!

XIV

LADY MERCHANTS AND SOCIALIST MAYORS

LADY MERCHANTS AND SOCIALIST MAYORS

ONLY three museums in France date prior to the Revolution, those of Rheims, founded in 1748, and of Dijon and Nancy, founded in 1787. The opening in Paris of the Muséum Français in 1792, consisting of the royal collections and art treasures of suppressed convents, was the beginning of a great movement in this direction. At Lille the municipal authorities first got together a few pictures in the convent of the Récollets, and Watteau the painter was deputed to draw up a catalogue. On the 12th May, 1795, the collection consisted of 583 pictures and 58 engravings. On the 1st September, 1801, the consuls decreed the formation of departmental museums and distribution of public art treasures. It was not, however, till 1848 that the municipal council of Lille set to work in earnest upon the enrichment of the museum, now one of the finest in provincial cities. The present superb building was erected entirely at the expense of the municipality, and was only opened two years ago. It has recently been enriched by art treasures worth a million of francs,

the gift of a rich citizen and his wife, tapestries, *faïence*, furniture, enamels, ivories, illuminated MSS., rare bindings, engraved gems. Before that time the unrivalled collection of drawings by old masters had lent the Lille museum a value especially its own.

The collections are open every day, Sundays included. Being entirely built of stone, there is little risk of fire. Thieves are guarded against by two caretakers inside the building at night and two patrols outside. It is an enormous structure, and arranged with much taste.

The old wall still encircles the inner town, and very pretty is the contrast of grey stone and fresh spring foliage; lilacs in full bloom, also the almond, cherry, pear tree, and many others.

Lille nowadays recalls quite other thoughts than those suggested by Tristram Shandy. It may be described as a town within towns, the manufacturing centres around having gradually developed into large rival municipalities. Among these are Tourcoing, Croix, and Roubaix, now more than half as large as Lille itself. I stayed a week at Lille, and had I remained there a year, in one respect should have come away no whit the wiser. The manufactories, one and all, are inaccessible as the interior of a Carmelite convent. Queen Victoria could get inside the monastery of

the Grande Chartreuse, but I question whether Her Majesty would have been permitted to see over a manufactory of thread gloves at Lille!

Such jealousy has doubtless its reason. Most likely trade secrets have been filched by foreign rivals under the guise of the ordinary tourist. Be this as it may, the confection of a tablecloth or piece of beige is kept as profoundly secret as that of the famous pepper tarts of Prince Bedreddin or the life-sustaining cordial of celebrated fasters.

In the hope of winning over a feminine mind, I drove with a friend to one of the largest factories at Croix, the property of a lady.

Here, as at Mulhouse, mill-owners live in the midst of their works. They do not leave business cares behind them, after English fashion, dwelling as far away as possible from factory chimneys. The premises of Mme. C. are on a magnificent scale; all in red brick, fresh as if erected yesterday, the mistress's house—a vast mansion—being a little removed from these and surrounded by elegantly-arranged grounds. A good deal of bowing and scraping had to be got through before we were even admitted to the portress's lodge, as much more ceremonial before the portress could be induced to convey our errand to one of the numerous clerks in a counting-house close by. At length, and after many dubious shakes of the head

and murmurs of surprise at our audacity, the card was transmitted to the mansion.

A polite summons to the great lady's presence raised our hopes. There seemed at least some faint hope of success. Traversing the gravelled path, as we did so catching sight of madame's coach-house and half-dozen carriages, landau, brougham, brake, and how many more! we reached the front door. Here the clerk left us, and a footman in livery, with no little ceremony, ushered us into the first of a suite of reception rooms, all fitted up in the modern style, and having abundance of ferns and exotics.

At the end of the last salon a fashionably dressed lady, typically French in feature, manners and deportment, sat talking to two gentlemen. She very graciously advanced to meet us, held out a small white hand covered with rings, and with the sweetest smile heard my modestly reiterated request to be allowed a glimpse of the factory. Would that I could convey the gesture, expression of face and tone of voice with which she replied, in the fewest possible words!

After that inimitable, unforgettable "Jamais, jamais, jamais!" there was nothing to do but make our bow and retire, discomfiture being amply atoned by the little scene just described.

We next drove straight through Lille to the vast

park or Bois, as it is called, not many years since acquired by the town as a pleasure-ground. Very wisely, the pretty, irregular stretch of glade, dell and wood has been left as it was, only a few paths, seats and plantations being added. No manufacturing town in France is better off in this respect. Wide, handsome boulevards lead to the Bois and pretty botanical garden, many private mansions having beautiful grounds, but walled in completely as those of cloistered convents. The fresh spring greenery and multitude of flowering trees and shrubs make suburban Lille look its best; outside the town every cottage has a bit of ground and a tree or two.

During this second week of April the weather suddenly changed. Rain fell, and a keen east wind rendered fires and winter garments once more indispensable. On one of these cold, windy days I went with Lille friends to Roubaix, as cold and windy a town, I should say, as any in France.

A preliminary word or two must be said about Roubaix, the city of strikes, pre-eminently the Socialist city.

City we may indeed call it, and it is one of rapidly increasing dimensions. In the beginning of the century Roubaix numbered 8000 souls only. Its population is now 114,000. Since 1862 the

number of its machines has quintupled. Every week 600 tons of wool are brought to the mills. As I have before mentioned, more business is transacted with the Bank of France by this *chef-lieu* of a canton than by Toulouse, Rheims, Nîmes, or Montpellier. The speciality of Roubaix is its dress stuffs and woollen materials, large quantities of which are exported to America. To see these soft, delicate fabrics we must visit Regent Street and other fashionable quarters, not an inch is to be caught sight of here.

Roubaix is a handsome town, with every possible softening down of grimy factory walls and tall chimneys. A broad, well-built street leads to the Hôtel de Ville; another equally wide street, with mansions of wealthy mill-owners and adjacent factories, leads to the new Boulevard de Paris and pretty public park, where a band plays on Sunday afternoons.

But my first object was to obtain an interview with the Socialist mayor, a man of whom I had heard much. A friend residing at Lille kindly paved the way by sending his own card with mine, the messenger bringing back a courteous reply. Unfortunately, the Conseil-Général then sitting at Lille curtailed the time at the mayor's disposal, but before one o'clock he would be pleased to receive me, he sent word. Accordingly, con-

ducted by my friend's clerk, I set out for the Town Hall.

We waited some little time in the vestibule, the chief magistrate of Roubaix being very busy. Deputy-mayors, adjoints, were coming and going, and liveried officials bustled about, glancing at me from time to time, but without any impertinent curiosity. Impertinent curiosity, by the way, we rarely meet with in France. People seem of opinion that everybody must be the best judge of his or her own business. I was finally ushered into the council chamber, where the mayor and three deputy-mayors sat at a long table covered with green baize, transacting business. He very courteously bade me take a seat beside him, and we at once entered into conversation. The working man's representative of what was then the city *par excellence* of strikes and socialism is a remarkable-looking man in middle life. Tall, angular, beardless, with the head of a leader, he would be noticed anywhere. There was a look of indomitable conviction in his face, and a quiet dignity from which neither his shabby clothes nor his humble calling detract. Can any indeed well be humbler? The first magistrate of a city of a hundred and fourteen thousand souls, a large percentage of whom are educated, wealthy men of the world, keeps, as I have said, a small *estaminet*

or café in which smoking is permitted,[1] and sells newspapers, himself early in the morning making up and delivering his bundles to the various retailers. Here, indeed, we have the principles of the Republic—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—carried out to their logical conclusion. Without money, without social position, this man owes his present dignity to sheer force of character and conviction. We chatted of socialism and the phases of it more immediately connected with Roubaix, on which latter subject I ventured to beg a little information.

"We must go to the fountain-head," he replied very affably. "I regret that time does not permit me to enter into particulars now; but leave me your English address. The information required shall be forwarded."

We then talked of socialism in England, of his English friends, and he was much interested to learn that I had once seen the great Marx and heard him speak at a meeting of the International in Holborn twenty-five years before.

Then I told him, what perhaps he knew, of the liberty accorded by our Government to hold meetings in Trafalgar Square, and we spoke of Gladstone. "A good democrat, but born too early for socialism—the future of the world. One

[1] I give Littré's meaning of *estaminet*.

cannot take to socialism at eighty-three years of age," I said.

"No, that is somewhat late in the day," was the smiling reply.

I took leave, much pleased with my reception. From a certain point of view, the socialist mayor of Roubaix was one of the most interesting personalities I had met in France.

Roubaix has been endowed by the State with a handsome museum, library, technical and art school, the latter for young men only. These may belong to any nationality, and obtain their professional or artistic training free of charge. The exhibition of students' work sufficiently proclaims the excellence of the teaching. Here we saw very clever studies from the living model, a variety of designs, and, most interesting of all, fabrics prepared, dyed and woven entirely by the students.

The admirably arranged library is open to all, and we were courteously shown some of its choicest treasures. These are not bibliographical curiosities, but albums containing specimens of Lyons silk, a marvellous display of taste and skill. Gems, butterflies' wings, feathers of tropical birds are not more brilliant than these hues, while each design is thoroughly artistic, and in its way an achievement.

The picture gallery contains a good portrait of the veteran song-writer Nadaud, author of the immortal "Carcassonne." Many Germans and Belgians, engaged in commerce, spend years here, going away when their fortunes are made. More advantageous to the place are those capitalists who take root, identifying themselves with local interests. Such is the case with a large English firm at Croix, who have founded a Protestant church and schools for their work-people.

Let me record the spectacle presented by the museum on Sunday afternoon during the brilliant weather of April 1893. What most struck me was the presence of poorly-dressed boys; they evidently belonged to the least prosperous working class, and came in by twos and threes. Nothing could equal the good behaviour of these lads, or their interest in everything. Many young shop-women were also there, and, as usual, a large contingent of soldiers and recruits.

Few shops remained open after mid-day, except one or two very large groceries, at which fresh vegetables were sold. It is pleasant to note a gradual diminution of Sunday labour throughout France.

The celebration of May-Day, which date occurred soon after my visit, was not calculated

either to alarm the Republic or the world in general. It was a monster manifestation in favour of the Three Eights, and I think few of us, were we suddenly transformed into Roubaix machinists, would not speedily become Three Eighters as well.

At five o'clock in the morning the firing of cannon announced the annual "Fête du Travail," or workmen's holiday, not accorded by Act of Parliament, but claimed by the people as a legitimate privilege.

Unwonted calm prevailed in certain quarters. Instead of men, women, boys and girls pouring by tens of thousands into the factories, the streets leading to them were empty. In one or two cases, where machinery had been set in motion and doors opened, public opinion immediately effected a stoppage of work. Instead, therefore, of being imprisoned from half-past five in the morning till seven or eight at night, the entire Roubaisien population had freed itself to enjoy "a sunshine holiday." Such a day cannot be too long, and at a quarter past seven vast crowds had collected before the Hôtel de Ville.

Here a surprise was in store for the boldest Three Eighter going. The tricolour had been hoisted down, and replaced, not by a red flag, but by a large transparency, showing the

following device in red letters upon a white ground :—

FÊTE INTERNATIONALE DU TRAVAIL,

1er Mai 1893.

Huit Heures du Travail,
Huit Heures du Loisir,
Huit Heures du Repos.[1]

The mayor, in undress, that is to say in garments of every day, having surveyed these preparations, returned to his *estaminet*, the Plat d'Or, and there folded his newspapers as usual for the day's distribution.

In the meantime the finishing touch was put to other decorations, consisting of flags, devices and red drapery, everywhere the Three Eights being conspicuous.

A monster procession was then formed, headed by the Town Council and a vast number of bands. There was the music of the Fire Brigade, the socialist brass band, the children's choir, the Choral Society of Roubaix, the Franco-Belgian Choral Society, and many others. Twenty thousand persons took part in this procession, the men wearing red neckties and a red flower in their button-holes, the forty-seven groups of the work-

[1] Translation—International festival of labour; eight hours' work, eight hours' leisure, eight hours' repose.

men's federation bearing banners, all singing, bands playing, drums beating, cannons firing as they went.

At mid-day the defile was made before the Hôtel de Ville, and delegates of the different socialist groups were formally received by the mayor and deputy-mayors, wearing their tricolour scarves of office.

I must say the mayor's speech was a model of conciseness, good sense and, it must be added, courtesy; addressing himself first to his fellow-townswomen, then to his fellow-townsmen, he thanked the labour party for the grandiose celebration of the day, dwelt on the determination of the municipal council to watch over the workmen's interests, then begged all to enjoy themselves thoroughly, taking care to maintain the public peace.

Toasts were drunk, the mayor's health with especial enthusiasm, but when at the stroke of noon he waved the tricolour and an enormous number of pigeons were let loose, not to be fired at but admired as they flew away in all directions, their tricolour ribbons fluttering, the general delight knew no bounds. "Long live our mayor," resounded from every mouth, "Vive le citoyen Carrette!"

The rest of the day was devoted to harmless,

out-of-door amusements: a balloon ascent, on the car being conspicuous in red, "Les trois huits," concerts, gymnastic contests, finally dancing and illuminations.

Thus ended the first of May, 1893, in Lille.

St. Omer is a clean, well-built and sleepy little town, with some fine old churches. The mellow tone of the street architecture, especially under a burning blue sky, is very soothing; all the houses have a yellowish or pinkish hue.

The town abounds in convents and seminaries, and the chief business of well-to-do ladies seems that of going to church. In the cathedral are many votive tablets to "Our Lady of Miracles"—one of the numerous miracle-working Virgins in France. Here we read the thanksgiving of a young man miraculously preserved throughout his four years' military service; there, one records how, after praying fervently for a certain boon, after many years the Virgin had granted his prayer. Parents commemorate miraculous favours bestowed on their children, and so on.

The ancient ramparts at this time were in course of demolition, and the belt of boulevards which are to replace them will be a great improvement. The town is protected by newly-constructed works. Needless to say, it possesses a public

library, on the usual principle—one citizen one book,—a museum, and small picture gallery. The population is 21,000.

I was cordially received by a friend's friend, foremost resident in the place, and owner of a large distillery. As usual, the private dwelling, with coach-house, stables and garden adjoined the business premises. The *genièvre* or gin, so called from the juniper used in flavouring it, here manufactured, is a choice liqueur, not the cheap intoxicant of our own public-houses. Liqueurs are always placed with coffee on French breakfast-tables. Every one takes a teaspoonful as a help to digestion.

French people are greatly astonished at the absence of liqueurs in England. The excellence of French digestions generally would not seem to discredit the habit. In the fabrication of gin here only the corn of rye is used, and in small quantities, the juniper berry; it is ready for drinking in six months, although improved by keeping. I saw also curaçoa in its various stages. The orange peel used in the manufacture of this liqueur is soaked in alcohol for four months.

My object, however, was to see the high farming on an extensive scale for which this region is famous. Accordingly my host, accompanied by his amiable wife, placed themselves, their car-

riage, and time at my disposal, and we set out for a long round.

In harvest time the aspect of the country must be one of extreme richness. The enormous sweeps of corn, clover, and beetroot have no division from each other or the road; no hedges are to be seen, and not a tree in the middle of the crops, few trees, indeed, anywhere. Everywhere, on this 17th of April, the corn was a month ahead of former seasons, and, in spite of the long drought, very flourishing.

The first farm visited consists of 360 hectares (just upon 900 acres), all in the highest cultivation, and conducted strictly on the footing of a large industrial concern, with offices, counting-house, carpenters', saddlers' and wheelwrights' shops, smithies, mills and machinery, every agricultural process down to grinding the corn being performed on the premises, and by workmen in the employ of the owner.

As we enter these vast premises, and hear the buzz of machinery, we feel the complete prosaicization of rustic life. The farmhouse scenes of my own childhood in Suffolk, the idyllic descriptions of George Eliot, no more resemble actualities than the poetic spinning-wheel of olden times the loom of latest invention. Utility is the object aimed at, incontestably with great

results, but in effect unromantic as Chicago. It is high farming made to pay. All was bustle and activity as we made the round of the premises, beginning with the vast machinery and workshops. These walled-in buildings, divided into two portions, each covering three-quarters of an acre, reminded me of nothing so much as of the caravanserais of Algerian travel twenty-five years ago. Once the doors are bolted none can enter, yet to render security doubly sure dogs are chained up in every corner—we will hope, let loose at night.

I will not here go into agricultural details, only adding a few particulars.

The splendid wheat, clover, bean and rye crops attested the excellence of the farming. Dovetailing into these enormous fields were small patches of peasant owners or tenants, all without division or apparent boundary.

In the villages I was struck by the tidy appearance of the children coming out of school. The usual verdict on peasant proprietors hereabouts was that they do not accumulate, neither are they in want. Very little, if any, beggary meets the eye, either in town or country. We then drove to the château, with its English grounds, of the Vicomte de ——, friend of my host, and an ardent admirer of England and English ways. This

gentleman looked, indeed, like an English squire, and spoke our tongue. He had visited King Edward, then Prince of Wales, at Sandringham. As an illustration of his lavish method of doing things, I mention a quantity of building stone lately ordered from Valenciennes. This stone, for the purpose of building offices, had cost £800. In this part of France clerks and counting-houses seem an indispensable feature of farm premises. An enormous bell for summoning work-people to work or meals is always conspicuous. The whole thing has a commercial aspect.

Here we saw some magnificent animals, among these a prize bull of Flemish breed. It was said to be very fierce, and on this account had a ring in its nose. This cruel custom is now, I believe, prohibited here by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. On the other hand, I was glad to find the Vicomte a member of the kindred society in Paris, and he assured me that he was constantly holding his green card of membership over offenders *in terrorem*.

We hardly expect a rich aristocrat to make utility the first object in his agricultural pursuits. High farming was nevertheless here the order of the day.

We next drove to Clairmarais, a village some miles off in quite another direction, coming in

sight of magnificent forests. Our errand was to the ancient Cistercian abbey, now the property of a capitalist, and turned into the business premises of his large farm. Of the original monastery, founded in 1140, hardly a trace remains. Abutting on the outer wall is the chapel, and before it a small enclosed flower-garden full of wallflowers and flowering shrubs, a bit of prettiness welcome to the eye. Just beyond, too, was an old-fashioned, irregularly planted orchard, with young cattle grazing under the bloom-laden trees, the turf dazzlingly bright, but less so than the young corn and rye, now ready for first harvesting.

The vaulted kitchens with vast fireplaces are relics of the ancient abbey, and even now form most picturesque interiors. At a long wooden table in one sat a blue-bloused group drinking cider out of huge yellow mugs—scene for a painter. Another, fitted up as a dairy, was hardly less of a picture. On shelves in the dark, antiquated chamber lay large, red-earthen pans full of cream for cheese-making. The brown-robed figure of a lay brother would have seemed appropriate in either place.

Outside these all was modernization and hard prose. We saw the shepherd returning with his sheep from the herbage, the young lambs bleating pitifully in an inner shed. It is the custom here

to send the sheep afield during the day, the lambs meantime being fed on hay. Here again, I should say, is a commercial mistake. The lamb of pasture-fed animals must be incontestably superior. Humanity here seems on the side of utilitarianism. Who can say? Perhaps the inferiority of French meat in certain regions arises from this habit of stabling cattle and sheep. The drive from Clairmarais to St. Omer took us through a quite different and much more attractive country. We were now in the marais, an amphibious stretch of country, cut up into gardens and only accessible by tiny canals. It is a small Holland. This vast stretch of market garden, intersected by waterways just admitting the passage of a boat, is very productive. Three pounds per hectare is often paid in rent. The early vegetables, conveyed by boat to St. Omer, are largely exported to England. Every inch of ground is turned to account, the turf-bordered, canal-bound gardens making a pretty scene, above the green levels intersected by gleaming water the fine towers of St. Omer clearly outlined against the brilliant sky.

The English colony of former days vanished on the outbreak of the last war, not to return. A few young English Catholics still prepare for the priesthood here, and eighty more were at this time

pursuing their studies at Douai, under the charge of English Benedictines. "Why," impatiently asked Arthur Young in 1788, "are Catholics to emigrate in order to be ill-educated abroad, instead of being allowed institutions that would educate them well at home?"

The disabilities he reprobates have long since been removed, but English-speaking seminarists still flock to Douai.

Here I close this agricultural and industrial round in Picardy and French Flanders, regions so near home, yet so unfamiliar to most of us! And here I close what, in many respects, may be called another round in unfrequented France.

THE END

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